Shojo Beat Manga

Tail of the Moon

Story & A

Rinko Ueda

2

Tail of the Moon

Usagi is the granddaughter of the leader of a prestigious ninja village, but she's such a klutz that she's never made it out of the kiddie class. Frustrated with Usagi's lack of progress, her great-grandfather sends her to marry Lord Hanzo and have lots of ninja babies. But the lord has no interest in her or her childbearing potential!

Usagi and Hanzo finally return to Iga, where a wedding banquet awaits them . Usagi couldn't be more thrilled that her dreams are coming true! Unfortunately, the arrival of Oda Nobunaga's troops puts an end to the festivities. Can the Iga ninja protect their home against such a large army?

12

Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

A romantic ninja adventure!

Shojo Beat

Tail of the Moon

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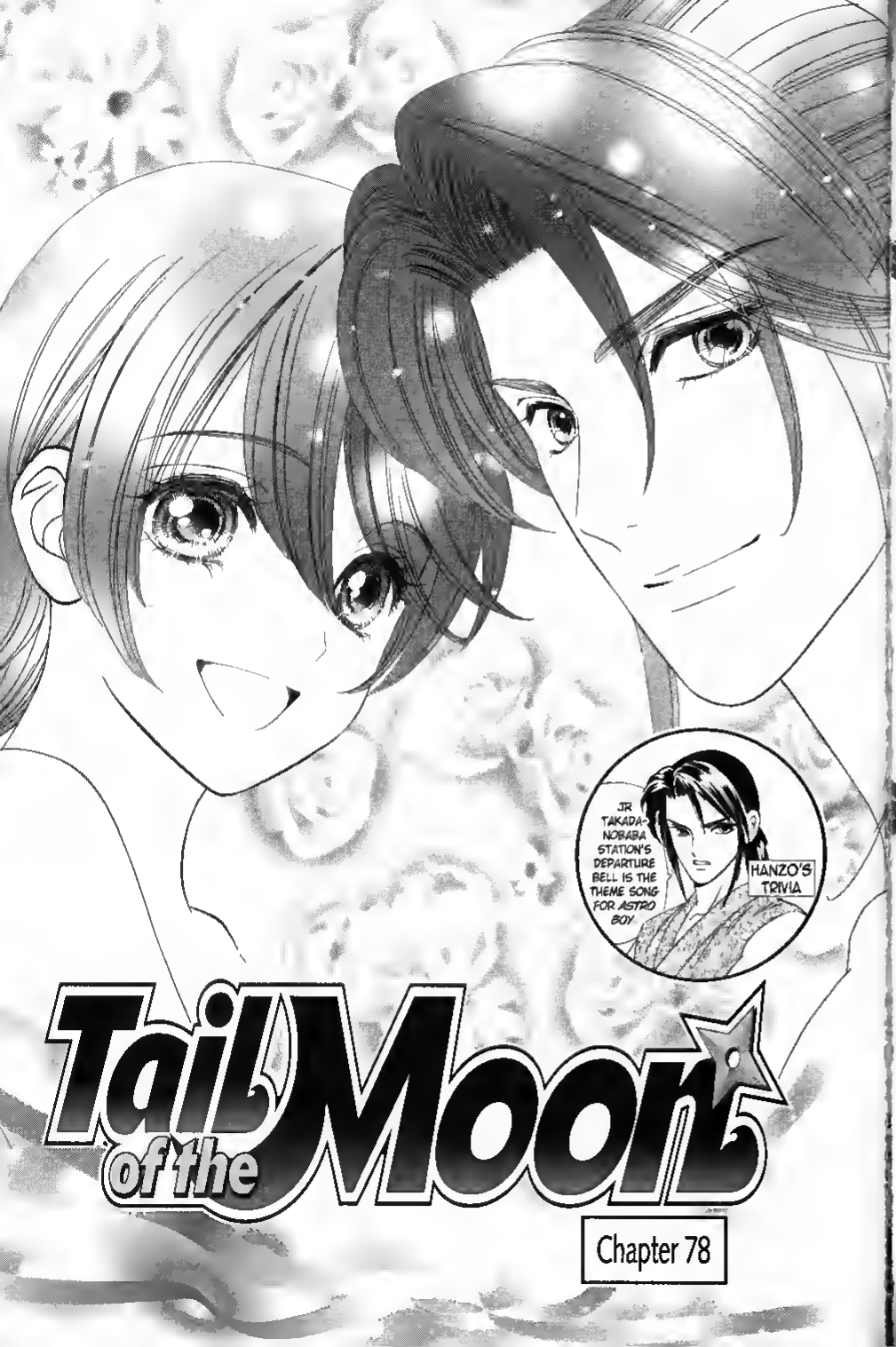


Tail of the Moon

Chapter 78

Tail of the Moon

Volume 12

CONTENTS

Chapter 78 3

Chapter 79 29

Chapter 80 57

Chapter 81 83

Chapter 82 109

Chapter 83 135

Chapter 84 161

Glossary 186

Story Thus Far...

It is the Era of the Warring States. Usagi is a failure as a ninja, but she is a skilled herbalist. She is working hard to qualify as a ninja so she can be the bride of Hattori Hanzo (aka "Shimo no Hanzo")!

Because Mamezo had gone missing in the Capital, Usagi searches for him and finally finds him inside a huge mansion. It turns out that Mamezo is actually the son of a court noble. Usagi decides to leave him, believing that he would have a better life there. Before returning to Iga, Usagi drops by to see Mamezo one last time. Mamezo clings to Usagi, claiming that he wants to go back to Iga with her. Seeing the strong bond between the two of them, Mamezo's grandfather entrusts Mamezo to Usagi.

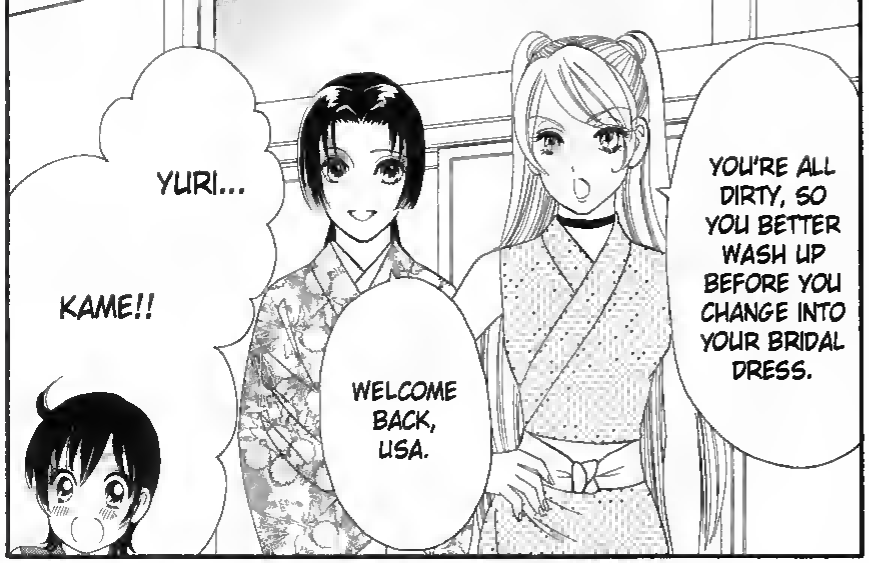
Meanwhile, Oda Nobunaga decides to attack Iga once again and orders Mitsuhide Akechi to lead the army. Having no knowledge of this, Usagi and the others head back to Iga happily..

IT...IT'S A STATUE OF A FROG...
YOU KNOW THAT SAYING... "HOPING THAT YOU'LL LEAP HOME SAFELY"?
WHAT IS THAT STATUE ?!
HM?
EEEK...
WE DIDN'T DO IT...
YOU'RE STILL JOKING AROUND ?!
POP
IT'S A PRESENT FROM ME.

AT LAST...
WE'RE FINALLY BACK IN IGA...!
HURRY UP AND GET INSIDE THE HOUSE.
I CAN WALK BY MYSELF...

AND THAT ALSO MEANS I CAN FINALLY QUALIFY USAGI AS A NINJA.
QUALIFY...
...AS A NINJA?
THIS TIME, YOU'VE REALLY BEEN QUALIFIED.
I...
CONGRAT-ULATIONS.
I'M SO HAPPY...!!
SO...
...WE FINALLY GET TO START YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY!!
WELL DONE, USAGI...

MASTER TANBA!
WHOA.
THANK YOU, GREAT-GRANDPA...!!
OOF.
MASTER ...!!
MASTER TANBA...
I'M TRULY GRATEFUL FOR THIS WONDERFUL PRESENT!!
SO NOW THE JOKE'S OKAY?!
SHUP
I CARVED IT MYSELF, HOPING THAT YOU'D ALL BE ABLE TO COME BACK FROM YOUR ASSIGNMENT...
...SAFE AND SOUND...
THANKS TO YOUR HARD WORK, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO STOP NOBUNAGA FROM ATTACKING IGA.


YURI...
KAME!!
WELCOME BACK, USA.
YOU'RE ALL DIRTY, SO YOU BETTER WASH UP BEFORE YOU CHANGE INTO YOUR BRIDAL DRESS.

I CAME TO HELP OUT WITH YOUR WEDDING TODAY.
YES.
KAME, IS YOUR WOUND ALL RIGHT?!

OKAY!!
LET'S TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR KIND OFFER...

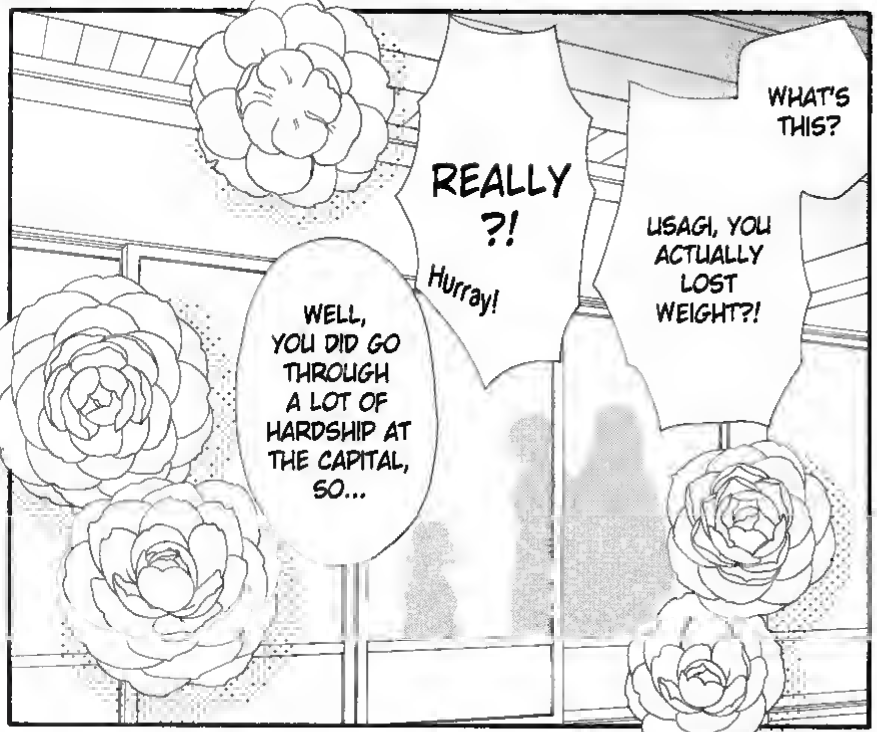
HUH ?!
HURRY UP AND GET IN THE BATH.
TUG

ARE WE REALLY GETTING MARRIED RIGHT NOW...?!
HANZO...

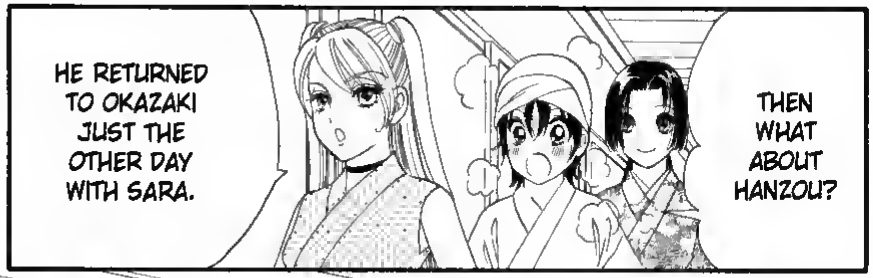
ZWAK
WEDDING ?!
WELCOME BACK, MASTER HANZO...
...AND MISTRESS USAGI.
TH...THIS IS...?!
WE'RE HAVING THE WEDDING NOW?!

IT'S SO PRETTY...
HEY!
DON'T TOUCH IT WITH YOUR DIRTY HANDS.

BUT I TOOK A BATH...
YOU'RE GOING TO RUIN IT!!
NOW, NOW.


WHAT'S THIS?
REALLY ?!
Hurray!
USAGI, YOU ACTUALLY LOST WEIGHT?!
WELL, YOU DID GO THROUGH A LOT OF HARDSHIP AT THE CAPITAL, SO...

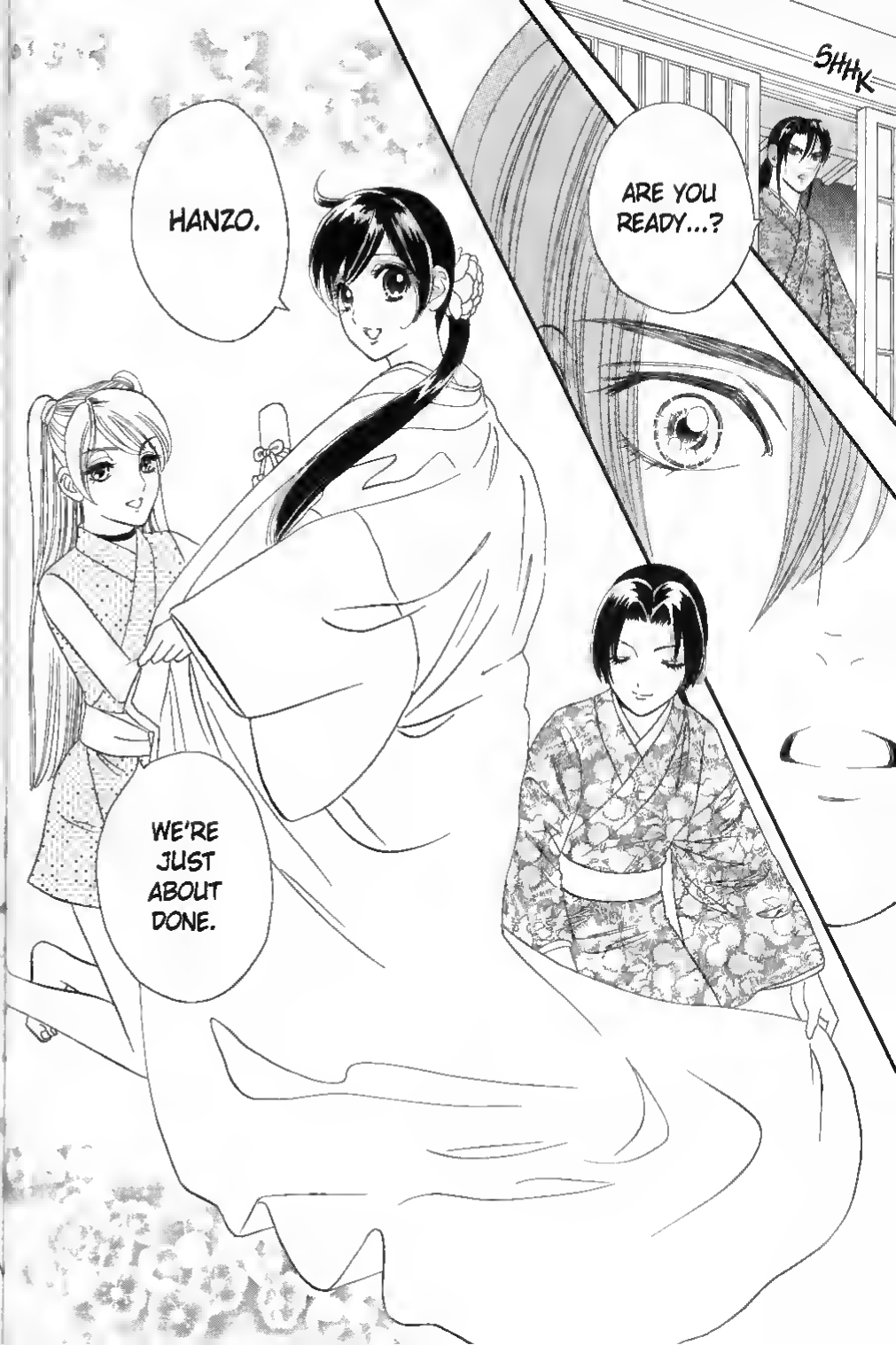
WHERE'S GOEMON?
HE'S STILL IN SAKAI.
WHAT ?!
HE'S ON AN ASSIGNMENT, SO HE CAN'T HELP IT.


THEN WHAT ABOUT HANZOU?
HE RETURNED TO OKAZAKI JUST THE OTHER DAY WITH SARA.

SO NO ONE'S HERE...?
ZWAK
QUIT COMPLAINING. WE'RE DOING THE BEST WE CAN UNDER THESE TIME CONSTRAINTS.
IS THAT...
...MY WEDDING DRESS?!

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED...
...SINCE I FIRST CAME HERE...
HANZO WAS SO KIND WHEN I MET HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME.
BUT WHEN I MET HIM AS HIS PROSPECTIVE BRIDE, HE WAS REALLY MEAN TO ME...
I SAID NO.
YOU CAN HAVE THE CHILD ALONE!!
BRINGS BACK MEMORIES, DOESN'T IT.
I HAD TO COMPETE AGAINST YURI...
...AND WAS PICKED ON BY HANZO'S OLDER SISTER...
AND THEN WE WORKED TOGETHER TO PROTECT IGA FROM THE ODA CLAN...
I'M JUST SO GLAD... I REALLY DID MY BEST...
STOP CRYING.
THE MAKEUP IS GOING TO COME OFF...
AAAAH!
SORRY...

YOU LOOK HAND-SOME... ♡
YOU CHANGED YOUR CLOTHES TOO, HANZO?!
WHAT A SURPRISE...
HUH?
WE'LL LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE THEN...
I'M SURPRISED AT HOW BEAUTIFUL MY BRIDE IS...


SHHK
ARE YOU READY...?
HANZO.
WE'RE JUST ABOUT DONE.

IT ISN'T ANYTHING SPECIAL, BUT...

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
S... SURE...
OF COURSE.

OH...
MAY I HAVE YOUR WRISTBAND, USAGI?

THANK YOU.
NOW I CAN FEEL YOUR PRESENCE NEAR ME...
...WHENEVER I WANT TO.

I THOUGHT I WAS DREAMING ABOUT ALL THESE HAPPY THINGS HAPPENING TO ME...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
OWWW...
PINCH
OUCH!

IT'S NOT A DREAM.
SHP

HANZO'S LEATHER WRISTBAND ...
KRK
THIS...

...OUR HEARTS WILL BECOME ONE.
TONIGHT...
...I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU LIKE THIS.
FOR NOW...
I CAN FIX THAT LATER.
HANZO... YOUR CLOTHES WILL GET WRINKLED ...
HUG

HURRAY
HURRAY
USAGI...
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE FACE OF MY GREAT-GRANDCHILD.
GRAND-PA...
WHY ARE YOU HALF-NAKED ?!
I'M DOING A DANCE FOR YOU TO HAVE A SAFE DELIVERY.

HANZO...
TONIGHT'S YOUR WEDDING NIGHT, SO LET'S GET YOU STARTED!
SANDAYU...

I THINK YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING A LITTLE TOO MUCH.
EEEK
GLARE

HUMPH
WEDDING NIGHT !!
WED...
W...
IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT!
YOU FOOL.
WAARGH...
HANZO'S GIVING ME A THREATENING LOOK...
FATHER ...!

RAH
RAH
THIS IS WONDERFUL, USAGI.
IT'LL BE MY TURN NEXT.
I'M SO HAPPY...
FINALLY... FINALLY...
...MASTER HANZO HAS GOTTEN HIMSELF A WIFE...
SNIFF
YIP!
CONGRAT-ULATIONS, USA! ♪
STOP CRYING!

SHIRO... MOM... DAD...
I'VE FINALLY BECOME HANZO'S WIFE.
I WONDER IF THEY CAN SEE ME IN MY WEDDING DRESS...

TAP TAP
I...I THINK I'VE GOTTEN TOO EXCITED BY THE ATMOSPHERE...
I'LL GO OUTSIDE FOR A BIT OF FRESH AIR.

USAGI!
YOU HAVE A NOSE-BLEED...
SQUEEZE
OOF.
SO I GET TO OFFICIALLY CUDDLE WITH HANZO...?!
SHH

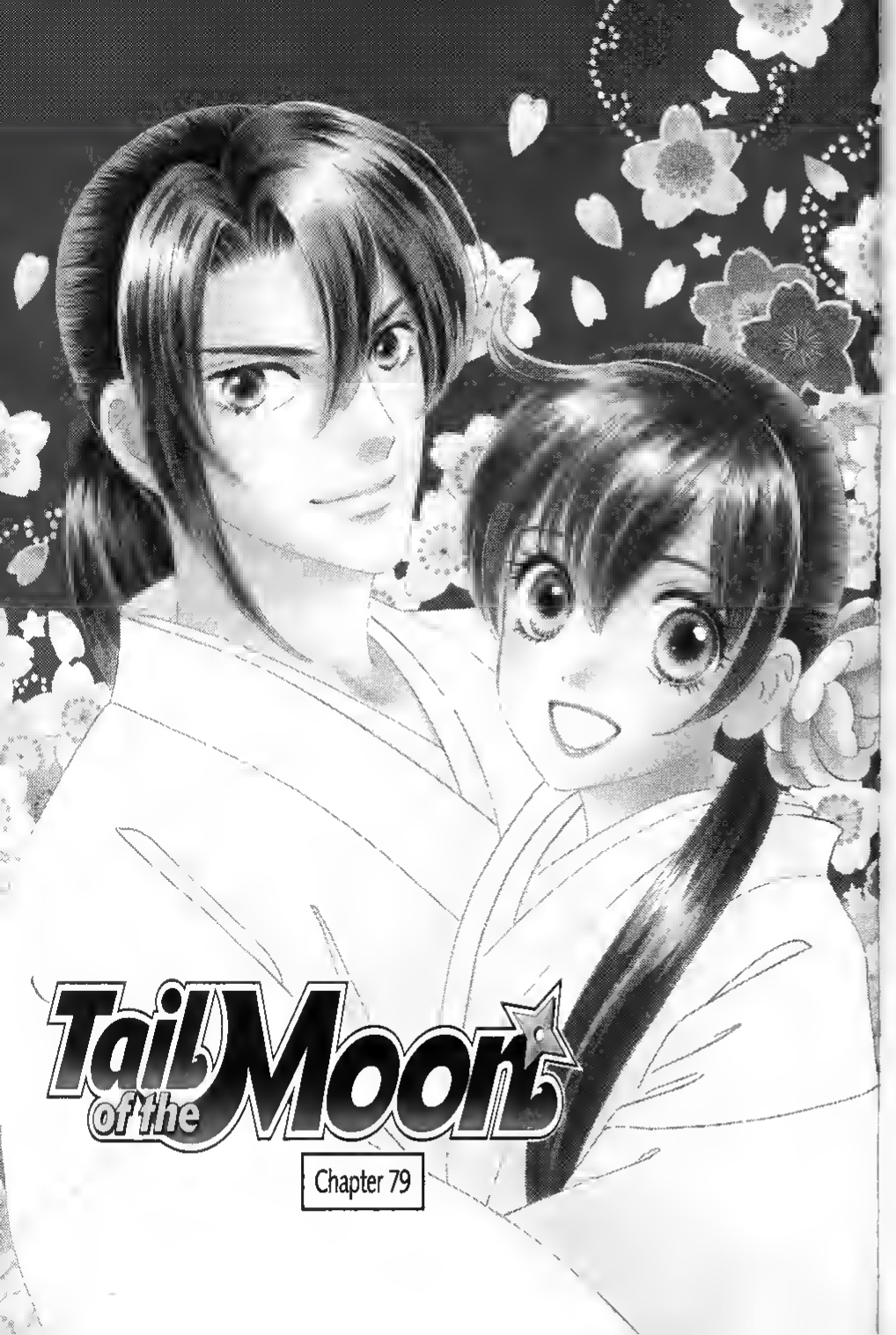
RAH
RAH

PHEW.
HA HA HA HA
THIS FEELS SO GREAT...

AND WE WERE THIS CLOSE TOO...
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?!
HMPH...
HYUUUUUU

THANK YOU, HANZO...
TO-MORROW ...
...WE'LL GO AND VISIT THEIR GRAVES.
STARE...
OH

SHW
AAA



TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO WITH GLASSES!"

-MISS "I LOVE BOYS WITH GLASSES", SAITAMA PREFECTURE

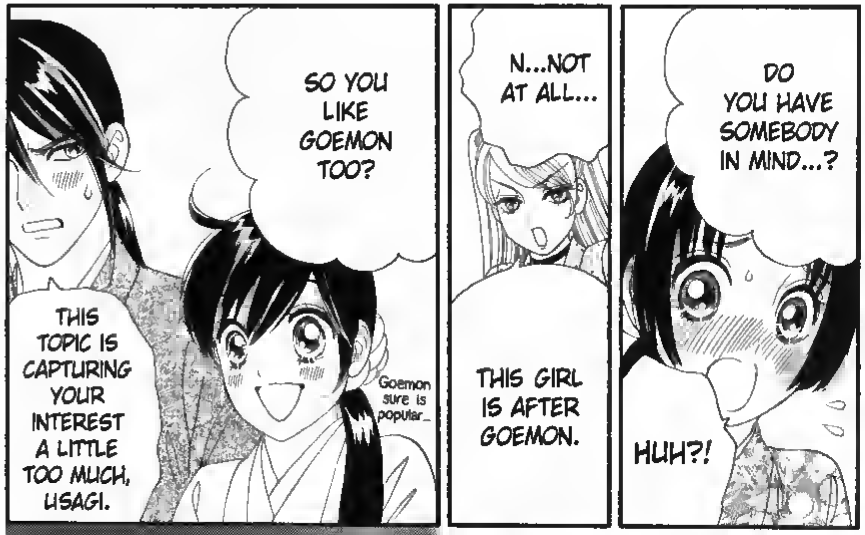
I GUESS THE GLASSES MIGHT GET IN THE WAY WHEN I KISS HIM... ♡
BY THE WAY, I'M WEARING FAKE GLASSES.
DON'T READ BOOKS INSIDE A DARK ROOM!
I'VE HEARD THAT HANZO'S EYESIGHT IS 20/10.
BETTER THAN 20/20?
WOW, HANZO...
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI IN A WEDDING DRESS!"

-MIYUKING, YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE

THEY SURE SOUND LIKE THEY'RE HAVING FUN DOWN THERE.
I WISH I WAS DOWN THERE TOO...
WH...
WHAT IS THAT...?!


SO YOU LIKE GOEMON TOO?
THIS TOPIC IS CAPTURING YOUR INTEREST A LITTLE TOO MUCH, USAGI.
Goemon sure is popular...
N...NOT AT ALL...
THIS GIRL IS AFTER GOEMON.
DO YOU HAVE SOMEBODY IN MIND...?
HUH?!

A GIRL LIKE KAME WOULD SUIT GOEMON NICELY.
WAAAA...
OH NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT...
HA HA HA HA HA
GOEMON'S MINE!!
I KNOW! ONCE GOEMON COMES BACK, I'LL HELP YOU TWO GET BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH EACH OTHER.

IT...IT'S A NIGHT RAID...
...BY THE ODA CLAN!!
CLOP CLOP CLOP CLOP

...LET'S SEE YOU TWO GIVE EACH OTHER A LOVING SMOOCH!!
NOW THAT THINGS HAVE BEGUN TO WARM UP...

DEFINITELY NOT!!
CLAP
CLAP
SMOOCH ...?!
SMOOCH! ♡
COME ON, SMOOCH! ♡

TMP
TMP
WE'VE GOT TROUBLE!!
MASTER HANZO!
ZWAK

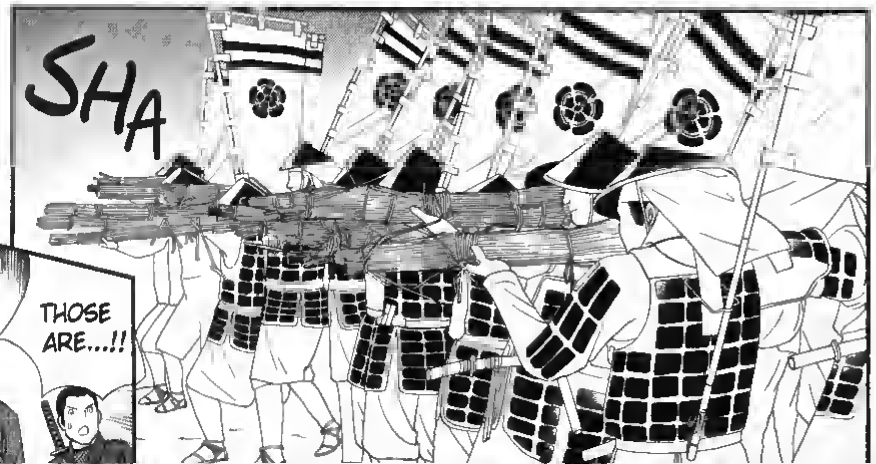
PROTECT THE STRONG-HOLD!!
THEY'RE SHOOTING FIRE ARROWS AT THE GATE!!
HANZO...
EVACUATE ALL THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN!!
YOU MUST EVACUATE TOO, USAGI!!
BUT...
I'LL HELP TOO.
I'LL PROTECT USA!!

GLOP GLOP GLOP
VISH VISH
FWOOM
SHK SHK

VISH
YEEAGH
YOU'RE NOT COMING THROUGH !!
KRA BOOM
AAAGH!
KRA BOOM
KRA BOOM
HMPH...
LOOKS LIKE THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE AN EASY TASK.

USA, COME THIS WAY.
HANZO...
DASH
TAKE CARE OF USAGI FOR ME!
WHY...?
YEEAGH
MITSUHIDE SAID THAT THE ATTACK ON IGA WAS CANCELLED.

CLOP
YOU'RE NOT GETTING PAST US!!
CLOP CLOP CLOP
TAKE THAT!
VISH
VISH
AAAH!
SERVES YOU RIGHT!!
URGH!


SHA
THOSE ARE...!!

BUT IT'S ONLY GOING TO BE A MATTER OF TIME...

KRSHAA
THE STRONG-HOLD IS FALLING.
ATTACK!!

TH
OK
USA!!

BOK BOK BOK
BANG BANG BANG
EEYAAAH!
THUD
USA, YOU'VE GOT TO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!!
NGH
NGH
WAAH
AH...
AAAH...
I...
...CAN'T STAND UP...
Get up, Usa.

AAAGH!
SLISH
TP
HAAAH ...!
KAME?!
...SA...
U...
TAKE... THIS...
...BE ABLE...TO ESCAPE...
...YOU'LL...
AS LONG... AS YOU HAVE THIS...
THE RABBIT'S FOOT?!

WHUP
I HAVE TO HELP KAME!!
WE'VE GOT TO ESCAPE!!
USAGI!
RIP
KA...
...ME...?
KAME?!
SHUP

U...
...
KAME?
...SA...
KAME?!
USAGI!
LOOK OUT!!
KAME!!

SQUEEZE
YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE IT...
YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE A HAPPY LIFE!!
BUT THIS IS YOURS, KAME!!
I'M...
...GLAD I WAS ABLE TO...
...PRO-TECT...
...YOU...

HANZO...
YOU FOOL!
WHAT ARE YOU STILL DOING HERE?!
KAME...
SHE WAS PROTECTING ME AND...
TUG
YOU'VE GOT TO STAY ALIVE IF YOU WANT TO REPAY HER FOR WHAT SHE DID FOR YOU!!

SHHH
GUURGH!

SMILING ABOUT HOW WE WERE GOING TO LEAD A HAPPY LIFE...
KRSHAA
IS MASTER NAGATO ALL RIGHT?!
GRAND-FATHER!!
GRAND-FATHER...
GRAND-FATHER?!

KAMEEEEE!!
KAME!
SHE WAS SMILING JUST A MOMENT AGO...

WE'RE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED!!
HUFF
HUFF
WHY...?
SO WHY...?!
WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE THIS...
!!
KLANG

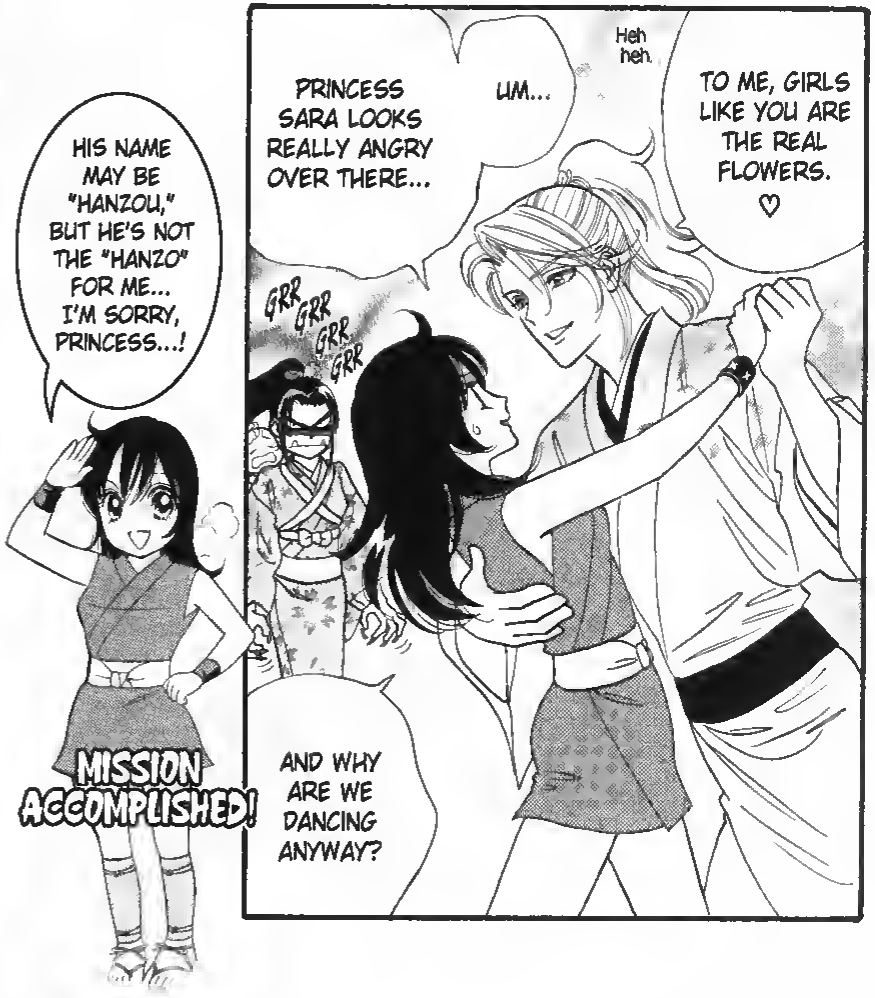
COME BACK, YURI!!
HOW COULD THEY...
MY GRAND-FATHER ...
YURI'S GRAND-FATHER...
THE ARMY IS ATTACKING FROM AOYAMA TOUGE AND OTOGI TOUGE AS WELL!!
WHERE'S GREAT-GRANDPA?
WHERE'S GRANDPA?
MASTER HANZO!!

MITSUHIDE
...?!

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI AND THE OTHERS DOING HANAMI!"

-MIWA, KANAGAWA PREFECTURE


HIS NAME MAY BE "HANZOU," BUT HE'S NOT THE "HANZO" FOR ME... I'M SORRY, PRINCESS...!
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
PRINCESS SARA LOOKS REALLY ANGRY OVER THERE...
UM...
Heh heh.
TO ME, GIRLS LIKE YOU ARE THE REAL FLOWERS. ♡
GRR GRR GRR GRR
AND WHY ARE WE DANCING ANYWAY?

WHY...?
YOU SAID THAT THE ATTACK ON IGA WAS CANCELLED!!
LORD NOBUNAGA ORDERED US TO ATTACK IGA ALL OF A SUDDEN.
BUT I OWE A GREAT DEAL TO YOU.
I WOULD NEVER TRY TO HARM YOU IN ANY WAY...
WHA—

MITSUHIDE ...!!
WHAT...
...IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!

HOW DARE...
...YOU DESTROY MY VILLAGE...!!
YOU HAVE TO ESCAPE...
PLEASE...
!

MITSUHIDE...
PREPARE YOURSELF!!

AHH!
DASH
VISH
FORGIVE ME...!!

IGA WILL FALL SHORTLY !!
YOU MUST ESCAPE BEFORE THAT!!
LET'S GO, HANZO.
WE HAVE TO ESCAPE...
THERE'S ANOTHER NINJA!!
KILL THEM!!

SWUP
RUSTLE

THERE'S WATER AND FOOD INSIDE.
ALL RIGHT... ALL...
GET INSIDE, AND STAY IN THERE FOR AT LEAST THREE DAYS!!
!
KRI
WHAT ABOUT YOU, HANZO ?!
GRAB

THERE HE IS.
GET HIM... GET HIM.
SHA
SHA
SHA
DAMN IT!
HE'S TOO FAST.
TP

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
O...
OKAY.
STAND UP.

I'LL FIGHT WITH YOU, HANZ...
THEN I'LL FIGHT TOO!!
NO!
I WANT YOU...
...TO LIVE THROUGH THIS.
JUST WHEN I TOLD YOU THAT I WAS GOING TO MAKE YOU HAPPY, THIS HAPPENS...
I'M REALLY SORRY...

I WILL FIGHT.
NO!!
YOU HAVE TO HIDE IN HERE WITH ME!!
IT IS MY OBLIGATION TO PROTECT THIS LAND.

I LOVE YOU.

HANZO...
OUR HEARTS WILL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.
THE WRISTBAND I SWAPPED WITH HANZO...

SHFF
SHFF
SHFF
SHFF

HANZO...

USA, IF YOU RAISE YOUR VOICE, THE ENEMIES ARE GOING TO FIND US...
HANZO!!
BA
M
BA
M
"I LOVE YOU"...
HANZO!!

ME TOO.
ME TOO, HANZ...

SLA
M

I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

I NEVER THOUGHT HANZO WOULD EVER SAY THAT...
THERE HE IS.
FIRE!
BANG BANG
BANG
BANG

SHA

MAMEZO...
PLEASE...
DON'T LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO HANZO...

CLOPCLOP
CLOP
PLEASE DON'T FIND US...
SHIVER
SHIVER
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
...BECAUSE I'M WITH YOU, USA.
I'M NOT SCARED...
MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED AT THAT HOUSE IN THE CAPITAL AFTER ALL.
MAME-ZO...

GIVE IT TO ME!
USA... I FOUND A WOODEN STICK...
MMF...
HOW... ...DO I OPEN THIS...?
BUMP
THOK
THOK
KRI
AH.
SHA
OOH.

NGHH...
USA... I'M NOT SURE, BUT IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE ALL THE NOISE DIED DOWN...
HOW MANY DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE WE CAME HERE?

ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
IS THE WAR OVER?
IS HANZO ALIVE?!
GREAT-GRANDPA.
GRANDPA.
YURI.
EVERYBODY...
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
ZUFF
PLEASE...

SILENCE...

I THINK IT'S SAFE FOR US TO COME OUT.
O...
OKAY.
SLAM

THERE'S A STRONG BURNING SMELL...
SNIFF
UGH.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 81

LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO

TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
IS EVERY-BODY...
...DEAD...?

HANZO.
USA...
SHFF
HANZO!!
DASH

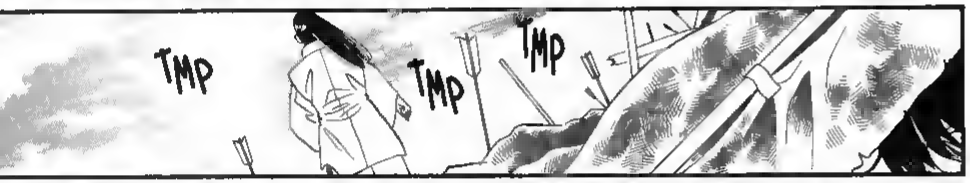
SAFE AND SOUND...
GREAT-GRANDPA...
GRANDPA...
HANZO...

HUFF
HUFF
HANZO ?!
HANZO !!
"I CARVED IT MYSELF, HOPING THAT YOU'D ALL BE ABLE TO COME BACK FROM YOUR ASSIGNMENT SAFE AND SOUND..."
...OF THE FROG...
THE STATUE...

"NOW I CAN FEEL YOUR PRESENCE NEAR ME WHENEVER I WANT TO."
THIS IS THE WRIST-BAND...
...THAT I GAVE HIM...
USA-MARU...
WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS...?
YAP
YAP
MAMEZO...
HIDE!
TUG
TMP
TMP
TMP
TI-THUMP
TI-THUMP

YIP
RUSTLE
USAMARU ?!
WAAAAGH...
YIP...
YIP...
I'M SURE...
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE OKAY...
YIP
...THAT HANZO IS ALIVE TOO...
USAMARU HAD IT IN HIS MOUTH.
USA...
...LOOK.

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
SHUP
NOT HER.
FWUP


TMP
TMP
TMP

TH-THUMP
HE'S STILL...
...IN LOVE WITH ME...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
RANMARU...

TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
RANMARU?!
TMP
TMP

FUMP
TUG

HUH?

DID HE SEE ME?!

TMP
TMP
USAGI ?!
WHAT?

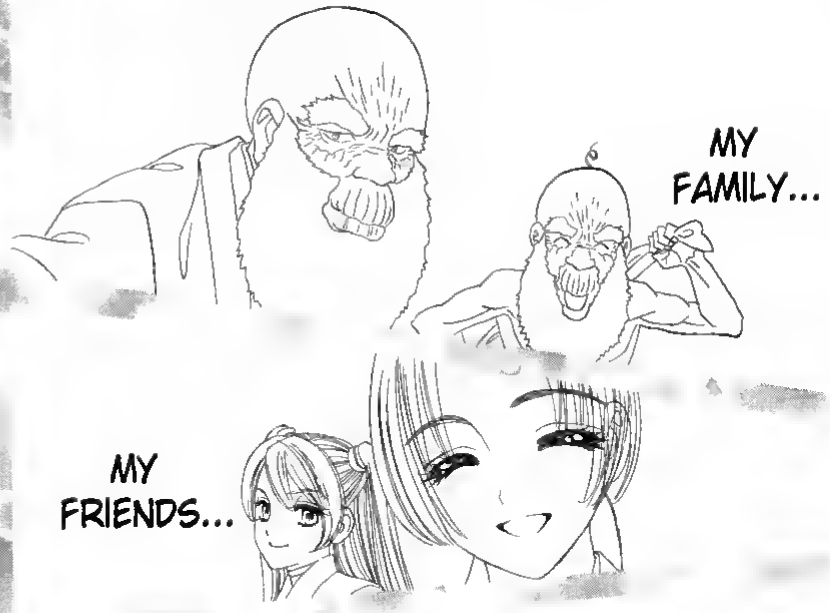
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
IS IT RANMARU AGAIN?!
I SEE THEY PUT UP QUITE A FIGHT.
WE TOOK OUR TIME...
...BUT WE SUCCEEDED IN DESTROYING THEM AS YOU ORDERED, LORD NOBUNAGA.
SO THAT'S NOBU-NAGA ...
THEN ...
...WHERE ARE THE HEADS OF THE IGA LEADERS?

KAW
KAW
WIPE
WIPE
"I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO PROTECT YOU, USA..."
I'M SORRY, KAME...
...THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED ...
IF I HAD BEEN STRONGER ...
I'M SORRY ...

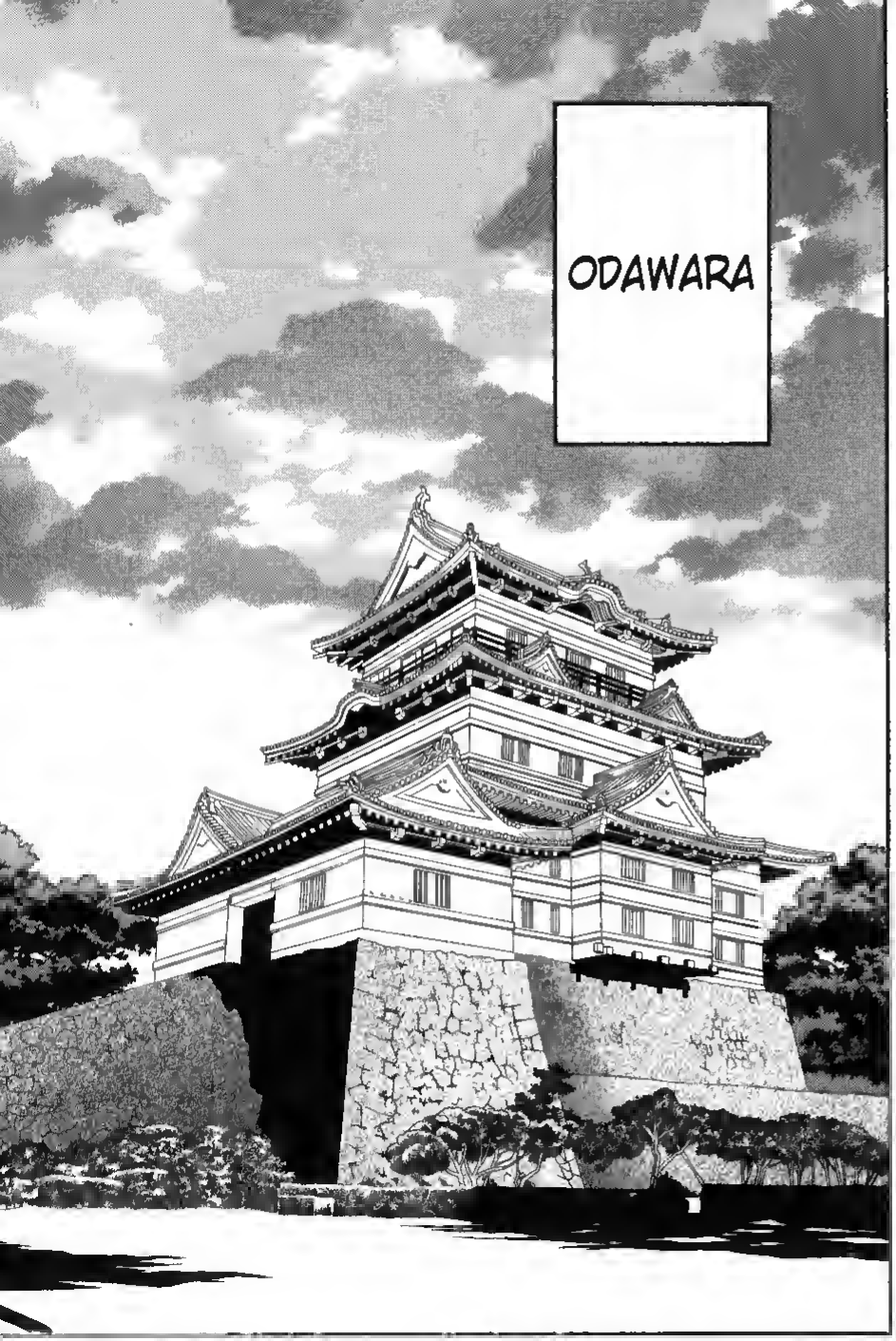
DEATHS...
...OF THE HIGH-RANKING NINJA...
ARE MASTER TANBA AND HANZO...
...BOTH DEAD...?
...BUT THE BODIES ARE IN A TERRIBLE STATE, SO THEY'RE IN NO CONDITION TO TAKE A LOOK AT...
I DON'T CARE. SHOW THEM TO ME.
CLIP CLOP
CLIP CLOP
YES, SIR.
I CONFIRMED THE DEATHS OF THE THREE HIGH-RANKING NINJA— HATTORI, MOMOCHI, AND FUJIBAYASHI...

DON'T...
...RAISE YOUR VOICE...
...WHEN YOU CRY...
THEY'VE TAKEN EVERYTHING FROM ME.
WHAT...
...DO WE DO FROM NOW ON...?
HUG

...HANZO.



AND...


ODAWARA

WHAT IS THE MATTER?
AN...AN INTRUDER WAS IN THE GARDEN...
AAAH!
AAAH!
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU AROUND BEFORE...
THAT'S STRANGE...
AN INTRUDER?
EEEEK!
AAAH!
FAINT

WHUP
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
TWITCH
GATHER AROUND, GATHER AROUND...!!
SNEAK

TO THE BACK GATE! HURRY!
THEN THIS ONE MUST HAVE BEEN A DECOY!!
THERE'S AN INTRUDER AT THE BACK GATE...
WHA...
WHAT?!
HUFF
HUFF
HUMPH...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU NOT TO COME?!
HUFF
HUFF
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU, USA...
BUT...
HUFF

STOP!
HOLD IT!
WAAAH
AAGH
SHA
KYAA!
EEEK!
ZZZ...
DASH
IT'S OVER!!
EEEEK!
THAT'S A DEAD-END...
VISH
STUPID FOOL.

FWOOM
A YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE THAT INCIDENT...
WE'RE NO LONGER...
...A BUNCH OF HELPLESS, CRYING KIDS.

SHAA
TUG
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT ME, MAMEZO.
I FINISHED THE JOB.
LET'S GO.
SHUP
YOU'RE AMAZING, USA!!

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 82

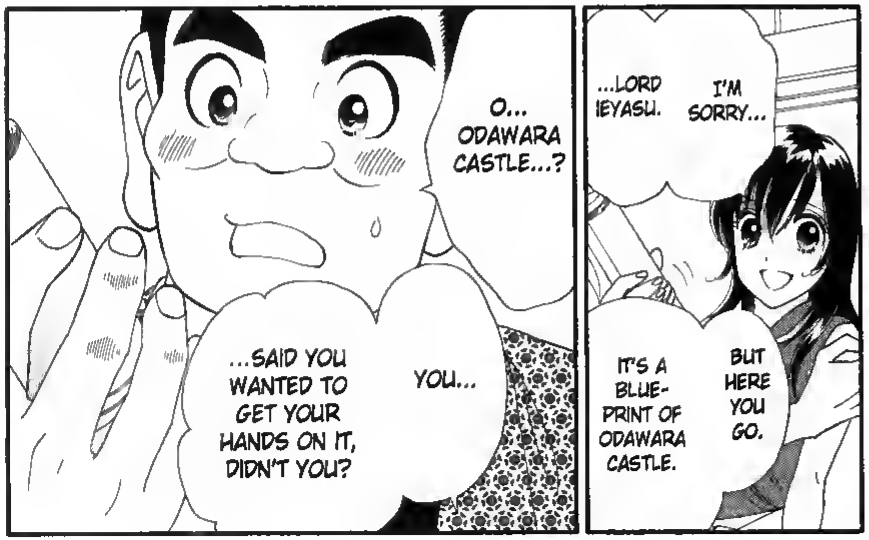
LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO

NOODLE NOODLE
HATTORI HANZO BEGAN TO WALK AT ONE YEAR OLD.
VISH
MY, MY, HANZO...
WHAT INTERESTING ATTIRE...
TCH.
RUSTLE
SHK
SHK
HMM.
THE WAY OF THE NINJA IS A STEEP AND NARROW PATH.
SUZUNE...
YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS TO A BABY ...!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WAS ABLE TO REACT THAT QUICKLY AT ONE YEAR OLD! WAY TO GO, HANZO. ♡

WHERE?
I WAS AT ODAWARA...
HUG
WHERE DID YOU DISAPPEAR TO?!
USAGI ?!

WE WERE ALL WORRIED ABOUT YOU SINCE YOU LEFT WITHOUT TELLING US.
ODAWARA ?!


O... ODAWARA CASTLE...?
...SAID YOU WANTED TO GET YOUR HANDS ON IT, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU...
...LORD IEYASU.
I'M SORRY...
IT'S A BLUE-PRINT OF ODAWARA CASTLE.
BUT HERE YOU GO.

I'M BACK...
OKAZAKI CASTLE
TOKUGAWA IEYASU'S CASTLE

THEIR LEADER, KOTARO FUMA...
...IS SAID TO BE A HUGE, MUSCULAR MAN...
...WITH FEROCIOUS EYES AND A MOUTH FULL OF FANGS.
WELL, WHATEVER HE IS, HE'S A FEARSOME NINJA!
FANGS...
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT?!
!!
LONG TIME NO SEE.
ZWAK
FOR GOD'S SAKE...
BUT I NEVER SAW ANYONE LIKE THAT BACK THERE.

THE HOJO FAMILY KEEPS THE FUMA CLAN AT ODAWARA CASTLE.
FUMA?
THEY'RE THE GREATEST NINJA CLAN IN THE KANTO REGION!
I DID SAY THAT, BUT...
YOU GOT AHOLD OF THIS BY YOURSELF...?
YES.
HOW DID YOU ESCAPE FROM SUCH A DANGEROUS PLACE?
USAGI...
DANGEROUS PLACE...?

IT'S USAGI, THE HERBALIST YOU WERE WORKING WITH BEFORE...
UM...
YUKI...
LONG TIME NO SEE...
WHAT?!

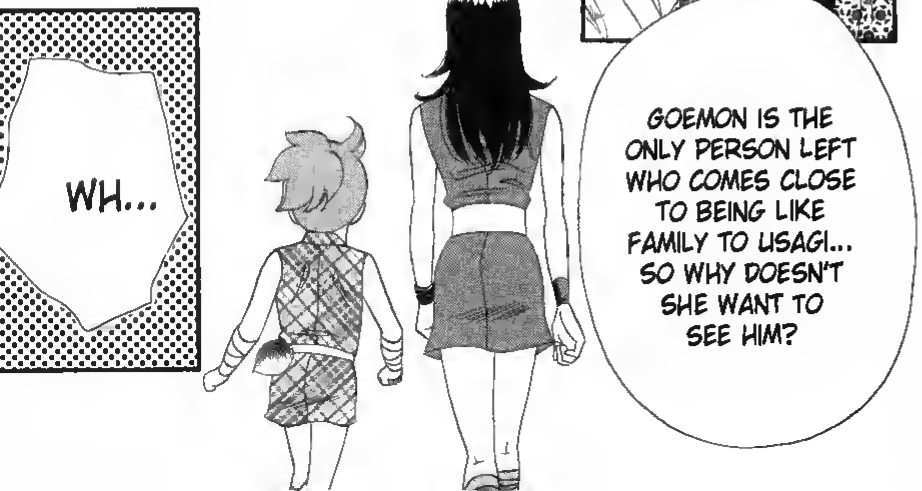
I'M WORKING FOR LORD IEYASU NOW.
THAT'S RIGHT.
IS IT REALLY YOU, USAGI ?!
IS IT...
IS...
I'M NOT SURPRISED HE SHOUTED...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOUT LIKE THAT...

I'VE COME TO REPORT THAT I AM BACK FROM THE WEST.
YUKIMARU !!
I'M GLAD TO SEE THAT BOTH LORD IEYASU AND HANZOU ARE DOING WELL.

GOEMON DROPPED BY YESTERDAY...
...BUT I SENT HIM AWAY, TELLING HIM THAT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SEE HIM.

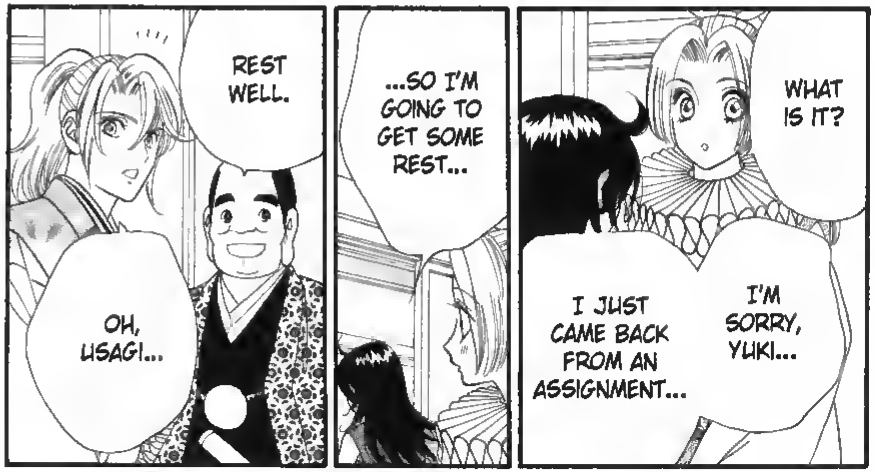
THANKS.

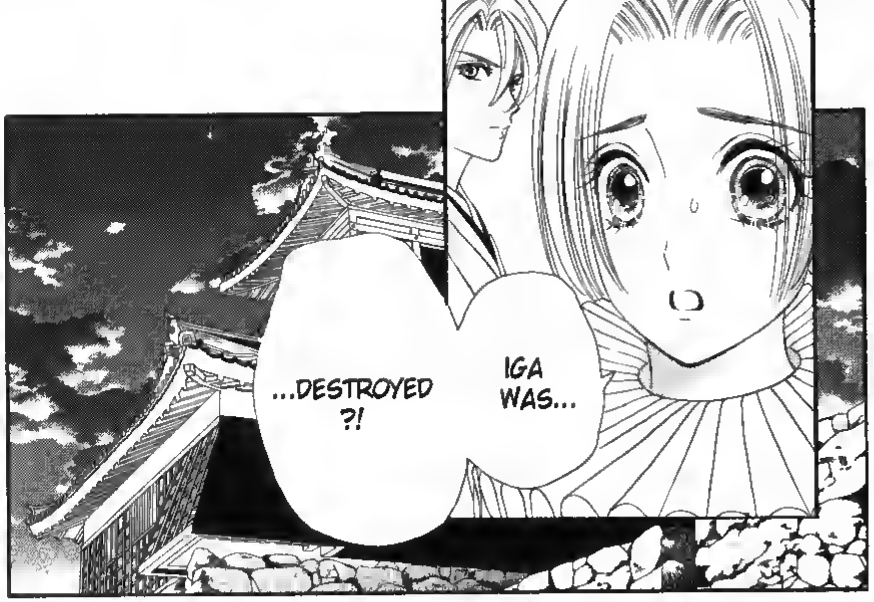
HMM...


WH...
GOEMON IS THE ONLY PERSON LEFT WHO COMES CLOSE TO BEING LIKE FAMILY TO USAGI... SO WHY DOESN'T SHE WANT TO SEE HIM?

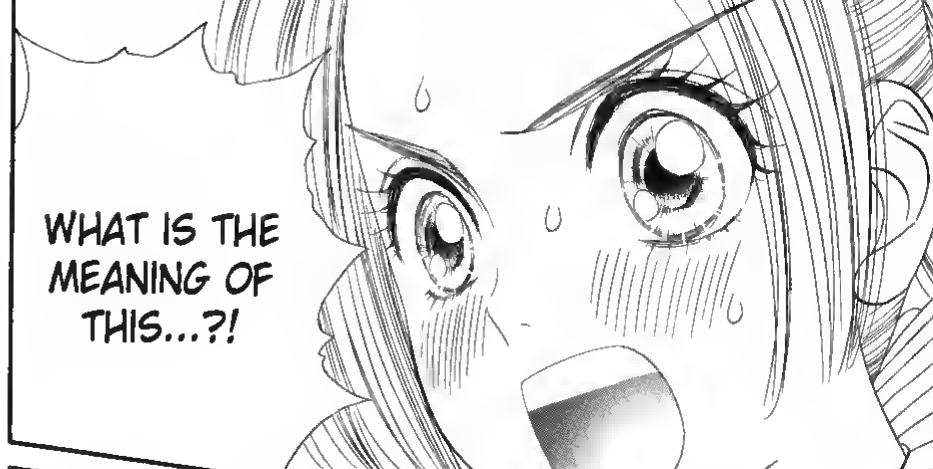
BUT WHY ...?!
YOU SAID THAT YOU WERE GOING TO MARRY YOUR FIANCÉ IN IGA...

...
OH...
UM... YUKIMARU...

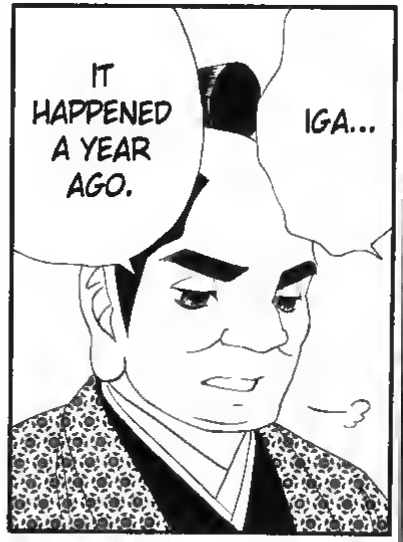

REST WELL.
OH, USAGI...
...SO I'M GOING TO GET SOME REST...
WHAT IS IT?
I JUST CAME BACK FROM AN ASSIGNMENT...
I'M SORRY, YUKI...


IGA WAS...
...DESTROYED ?!

USA...
I WANT TO SEE GOEMON...


WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS...?!

CALM DOWN, YUKIMARU.
WHAT HAPPENED TO USAGI...?!
WH...
AHH


IT HAPPENED A YEAR AGO.
IGA...

LORD NOBUNAGA DESTROYED IGA.

...SO THAT YOU CAN LIVE THROUGH THESE TROUBLED TIMES...
WILL I...
...BE ABLE TO BECOME A GOOD NINJA?
OF COURSE YOU CAN.
SO THAT YOU CAN LIVE ON STRONGLY EVEN AFTER I'M GONE...

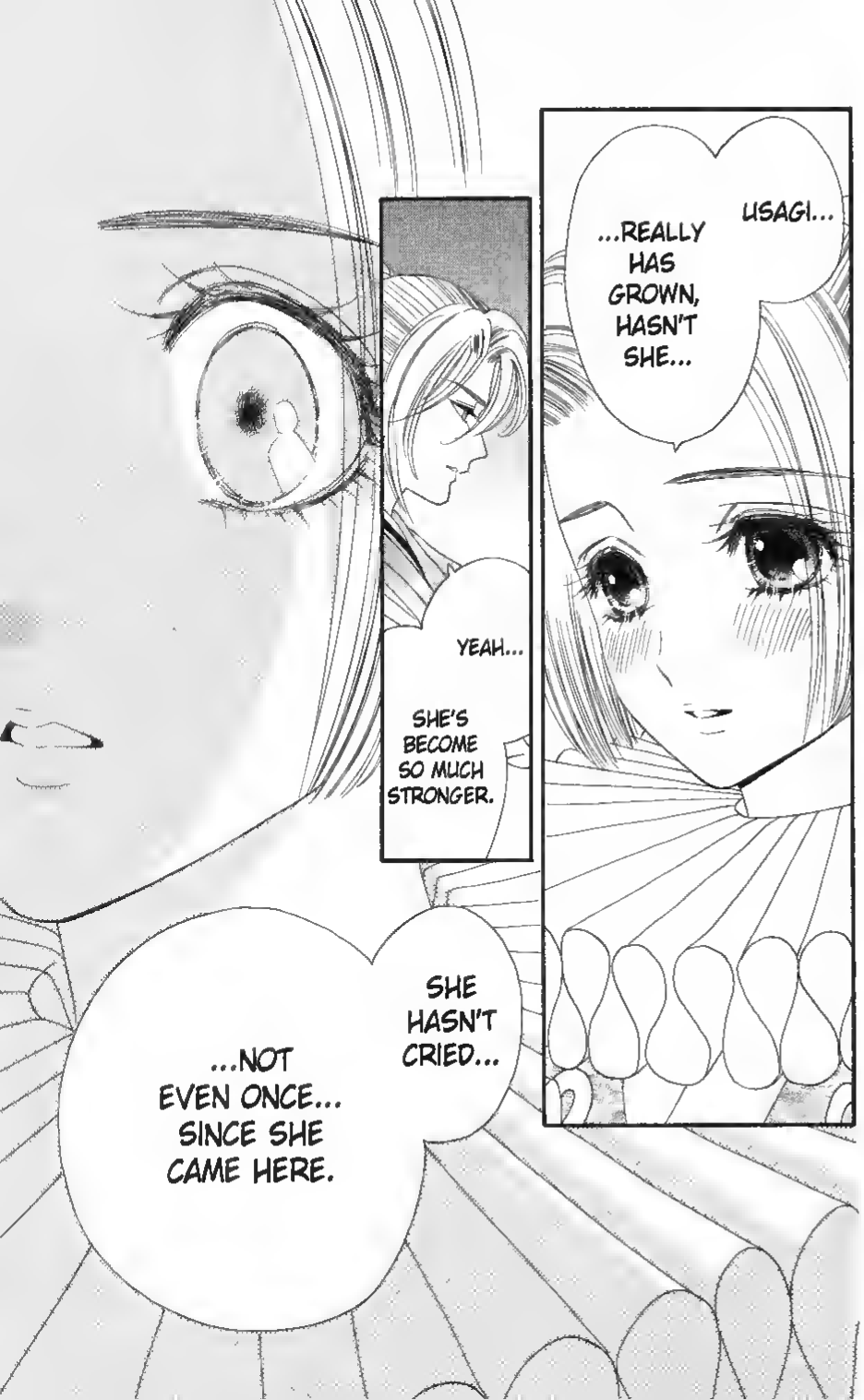
SIGH...
YOU CAN'T SEE HIM YET.
HANG ON FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.
I WANT YOU TO BE STRONG...
ONCE YOU BECOME AN OUTSTANDING NINJA...
...YOU CAN SEE HIM AND SURPRISE HIM.

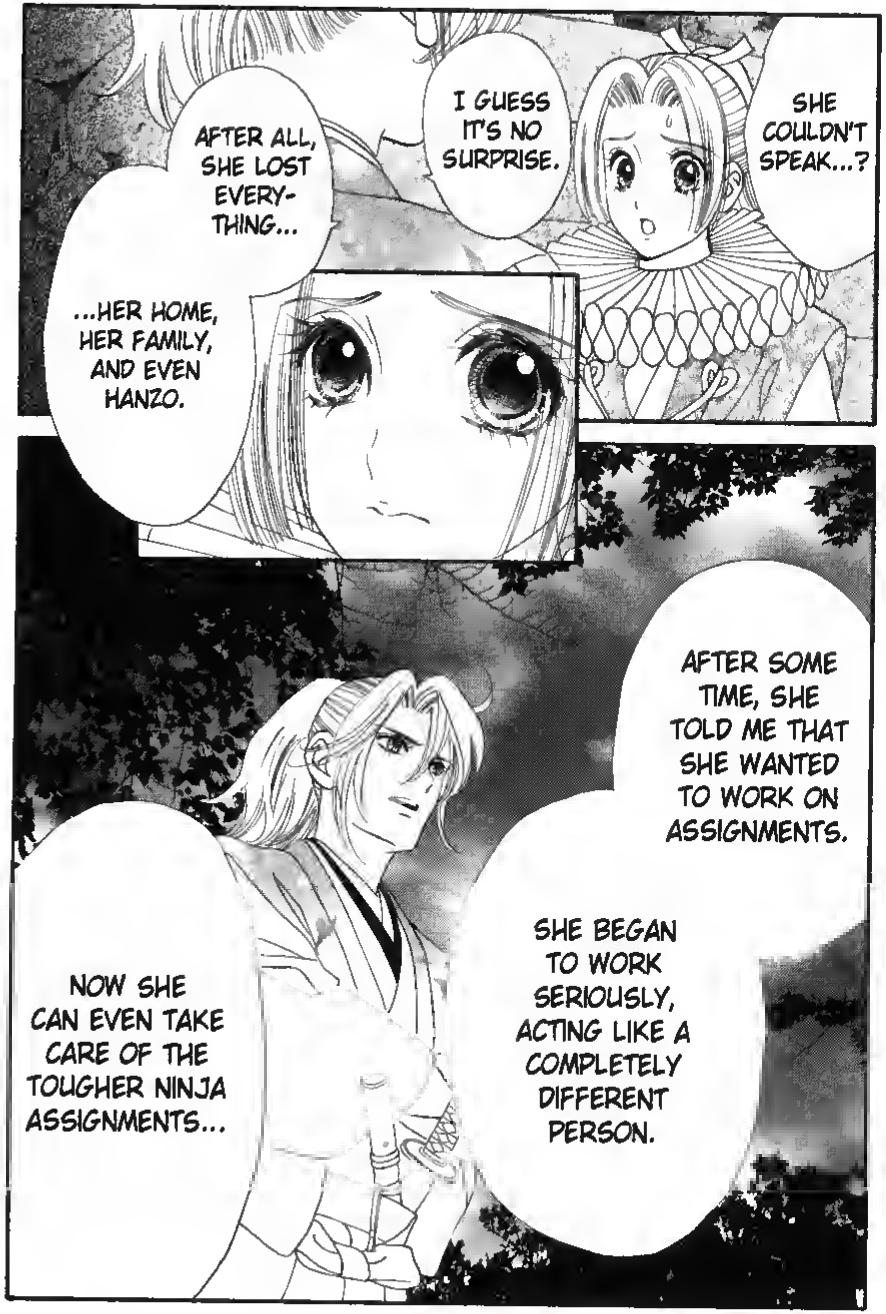
I'LL EAT THEM A BIT AT A TIME.
USAGI...
I...I'M SORRY...
...ABOUT IGA...
I...
...DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
IT'S OVER AND DONE WITH.

SHHK
TMP TMP
OH!
DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO MUCH...
I'LL GO AND PRACTICE...
DASH
HE'S GROWN SO MUCH...
SEE YOU LATER.
I BROUGHT YOU A PRESENT, USAGI...
WHAT IS IT, YUKI?
IT'S SO PRETTY !!
...BUT THEN THE CONFETTI INSIDE MELTED...
I WAS HOLDING ONTO IT TIGHTLY SO THAT IT WOULDN'T BREAK...

BUT I'M SO GLAD THAT YOU'RE BACK, YUKI...
WHAT...
I'VE BEEN WORKING ON NINJA ASSIGNMENTS, SO THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF HERBALIST WORK TO BE DONE...
OH... I SEE...

SHE HAS, HASN'T SHE?
USAGI... SHE'S CHANGED...
I FOUND USAGI...
USAGI!
...RIGHT AFTER THE ATTACK ON IGA. I BROUGHT HER BACK HERE TO OKAZAKI...
...BUT SHE COULDN'T SPEAK FOR A MONTH.
HANG IN THERE.
USAGI.


USAGI...
...REALLY HAS GROWN, HASN'T SHE...
YEAH...
SHE'S BECOME SO MUCH STRONGER.
SHE HASN'T CRIED...
...NOT EVEN ONCE... SINCE SHE CAME HERE.


SHE COULDN'T SPEAK...?
I GUESS IT'S NO SURPRISE.
AFTER ALL, SHE LOST EVERY-THING...
...HER HOME, HER FAMILY, AND EVEN HANZO.
AFTER SOME TIME, SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE WANTED TO WORK ON ASSIGNMENTS.
SHE BEGAN TO WORK SERIOUSLY, ACTING LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON.
NOW SHE CAN EVEN TAKE CARE OF THE TOUGHER NINJA ASSIGNMENTS...

SO THIS IS THE BLUEPRINT FOR ODAWARA CASTLE...
Hmm.
HANZOU'S FATHER HATTORI HANZO
A.K.A. BEARDED HANZO

USAGI'S BEEN DOING EXCELLENT WORK, HASN'T SHE.

I ONCE TOLD HER THAT WE NEEDED TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE HOJO FAMILY SINCE THEY'RE POWERFUL IN THE KANTO REGION...
YES...

WELL, ODAWARA CASTLE IS PROBABLY IN A PANIC RIGHT NOW.

SHE...
...HASN'T EVEN CRIED ONCE...?!
SPLASH
AAH...
THE BATH FEELS GREAT...

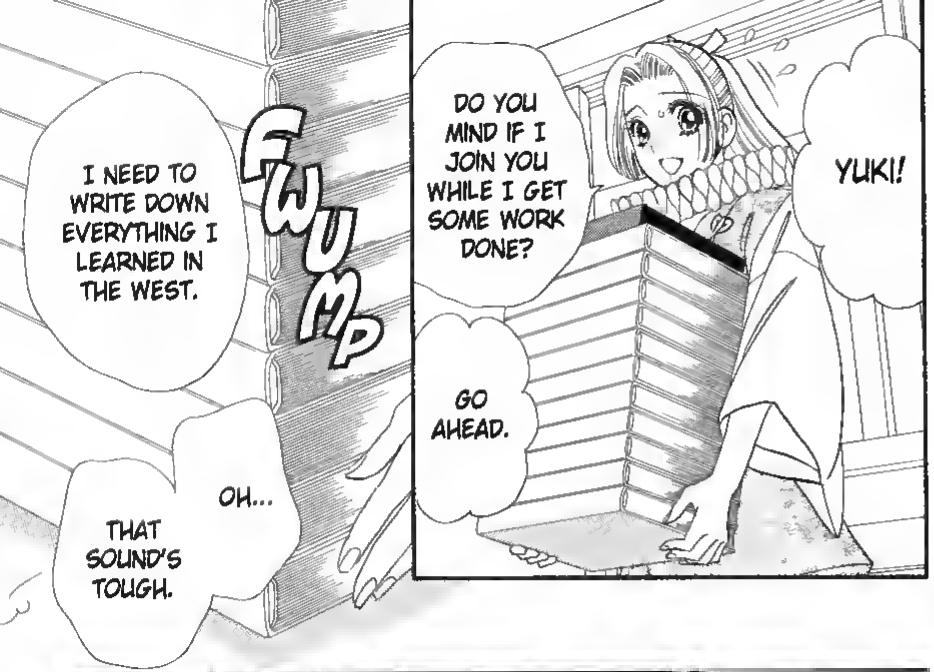
KRASH
TOSS
URGH!
I...
I'M SO SORRY.
YOU IDIOTS!
HOW COULD YOU LET A MERE KUNOICHI GET THE BETTER OF YOU?!

ODAWARA CASTLE
WHO STOLE THE BLUE-PRINT?!
I...
I ONLY KNOW THAT IT WAS A KUNOICHI AND A SMALL CHILD...
YANK
AGH...

...DRIVE YOU INTO A CORNER...
I'LL TRACK YOU AT ALL COSTS...
DAMN KUNOICHI...
...AND HAVE YOU KNEEL DOWN BEFORE ME!!
...THE NAME OF THE FUMA CLAN WILL BECOME OBSOLETE!!
AT THIS RATE...

LET'S GO!

LITTLE HANZO


YUKI!
DO YOU MIND IF I JOIN YOU WHILE I GET SOME WORK DONE?
GO AHEAD.
FWUMP
I NEED TO WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING I LEARNED IN THE WEST.
OH...
THAT SOUND'S TOUGH.

LET ME HELP YOU.
Oh no, I didn't mean to have you help me...
THAT'S OKAY.
YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN WORK TO DO, DON'T YOU?
DON'T WORRY, I'M ALMOST DONE...
OOH... ARE THESE BOOKS FROM THE WEST?!

Wow This is great

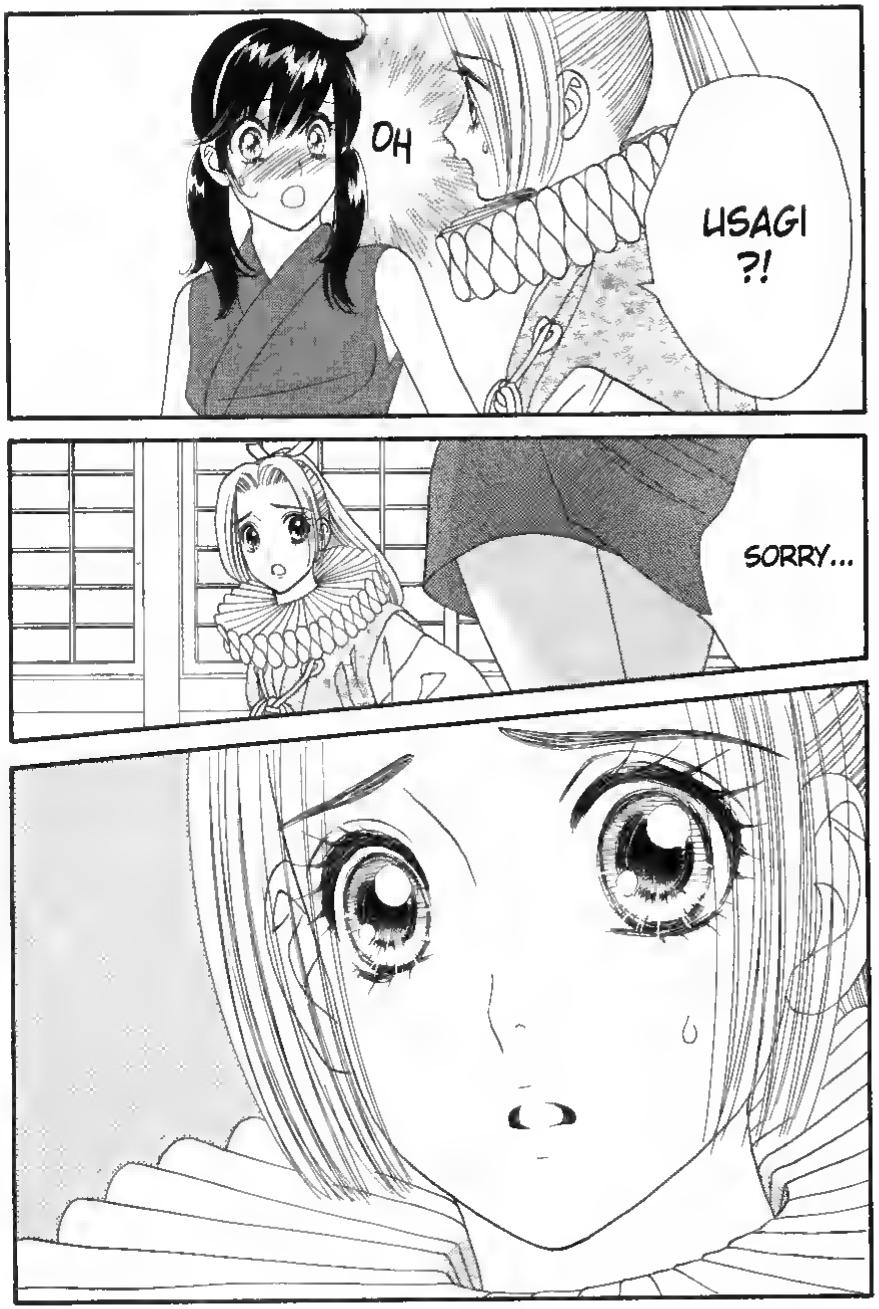
I'LL GO PICK THE HERBS.
DASH

OKAY.
BE CAREFUL.

YOU LOOK BUSY.
HMM...
I NEED TO MAKE THIS AND THIS NEXT...

AND YOU'VE BECOME REALLY STRONG, USAGI.
YOU...
...THINK SO?
THE WEST SURE HAS A LOT OF INTERESTING THINGS, DOESN'T IT...
Oh...
BA BUMP
SHA
TH...THIS IS AN INK BRUSH FROM THE WEST...
THAT'S AN INTERESTING BRUSH YOU'VE GOT THERE, YUKI.

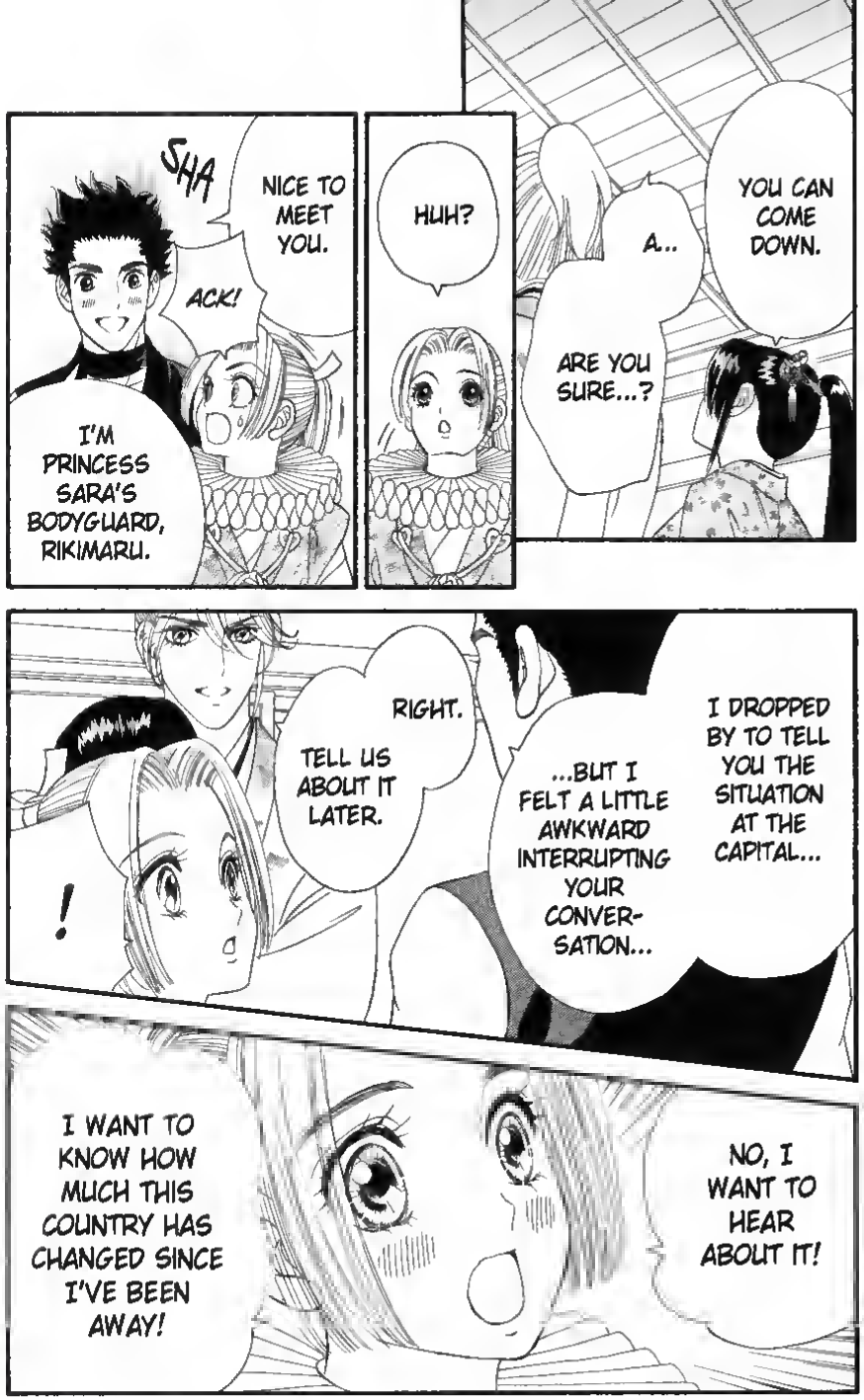
SO YUKI...
HOW WAS STUDYING ABROAD?
WELL...
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BEST DESCRIBE IT, BUT...
IT WAS WORTH IT!
THAT'S ONE THING I'M SURE ABOUT.
YUKI, YOU'RE SO COOL...
HUH?
YOU'VE BECOME QUITE MANLY...


OH
USAGI ?!
SORRY...

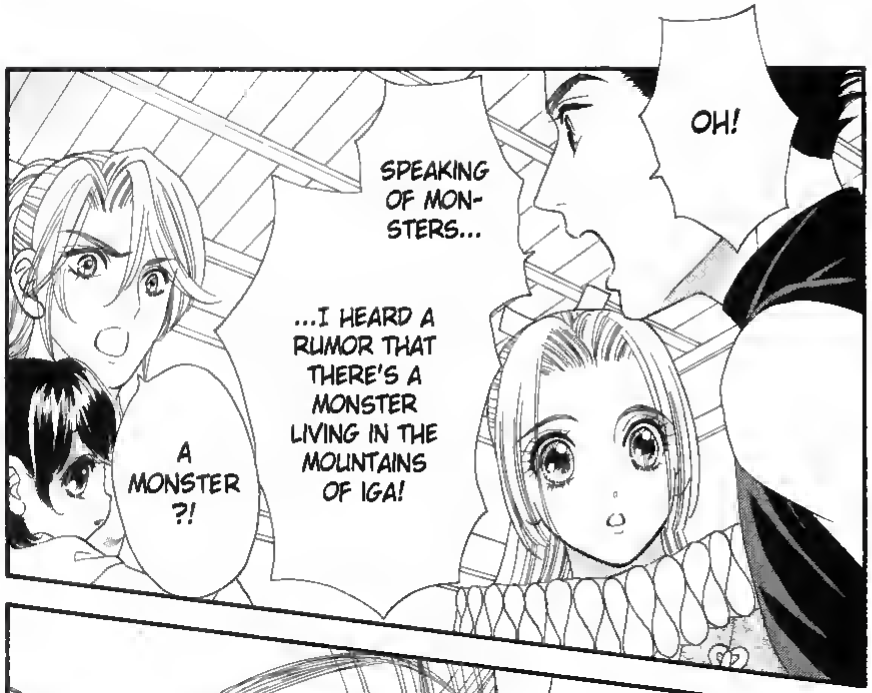
SEVERAL DAYS LATER
FLIP
FMP
FMP
LET ME DO THE REST...
I'M GOING TO TAKE A BREAK TO-MORROW...
LET'S CALL IT A DAY.
HUFF HUFF
A BREAK ?!
YOU'VE BEEN WORKING HARD TOO... RIGHT, USAGI?
YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST AS WELL...
THIS IS GOING TO TAKE FOR-EVER...
I DON'T WANT ANY REST.
I WANT TO WORK!!

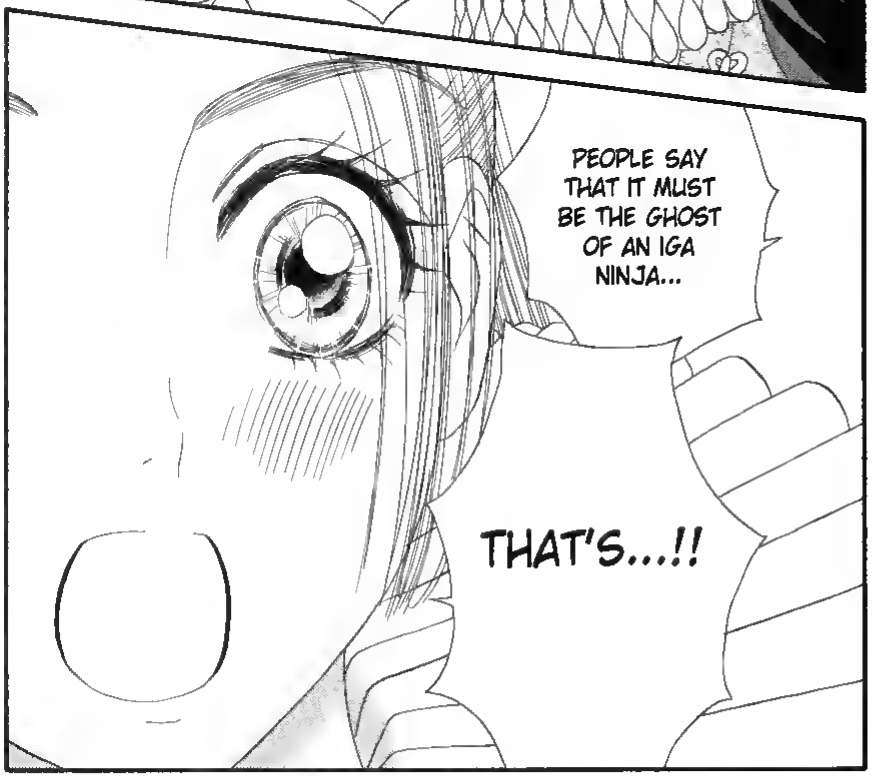
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF USAGI THESE DAYS, SARA?
I OVER-HEARD YOU TALKING ABOUT USAGI...
HEE!
KISS KISS
HERE YOU GO...
HERE'S DADDY...
AND SHE SMILED THEN, DIDN'T SHE?
WHEN SHE CAME HERE AFTER IGA WAS DESTROYED, SHE WAS PRETTY MUCH EXPRESSIONLESS FOR A LONG WHILE...
BUT WHEN IT WAS TIME, USAGI HELPED ME GIVE BIRTH TO KAGUYA...
THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT WAS WHEN WE SAW A SMILE RETURN TO USAGI'S FACE...

USAGI IS ACTING STRANGE?!
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
IT LOOKS SERIOUS TO ME.
BAM BAM
HE'S GOT A GUEST RIGHT NOW.
NO!
SHHK
DADA
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...
THIS IS MY WIFE SARA AND MY DAUGHTER KAGUYA.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
BOW
YOU CAN COME IN.


YOU CAN COME DOWN.
A...
ARE YOU SURE...?
HUH?
SHA
NICE TO MEET YOU.
ACK!
I'M PRINCESS SARA'S BODYGUARD, RIKIMARU.
I DROPPED BY TO TELL YOU THE SITUATION AT THE CAPITAL...
...BUT I FELT A LITTLE AWKWARD INTERRUPTING YOUR CONVER-SATION...
RIGHT.
TELL US ABOUT IT LATER.
!
NO, I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT!
I WANT TO KNOW HOW MUCH THIS COUNTRY HAS CHANGED SINCE I'VE BEEN AWAY!

SHE BABYSITS KAGUYA EVERY NOW AND THEN.
AND NOW THAT SHE'S BEGUN TO TAKE ON NINJA ASSIGNMENTS...
...I THINK SHE'S SMILING LIKE BEFORE...
THAT'S NOT A SMILE ON HER FACE!!
USAGI HASN'T SMILED YET!!
YUKI-MARU...
!


OH!
SPEAKING OF MONSTERS...
...I HEARD A RUMOR THAT THERE'S A MONSTER LIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS OF IGA!
A MONSTER ?!


PEOPLE SAY THAT IT MUST BE THE GHOST OF AN IGA NINJA...
THAT'S...!!

UESUGI CLAN
KATSUIE SHIBATA
MOURI CLAN
HIDEYOSHI HASHIBA
AZUCHI CASTLE
KAZUMASU TAKIGAWA
HOJO
CHOSOKABE CLAN
NAGAHIDE NIWA
LORD NOBUNAGA IS VERY CLOSE TO UNIFYING THE WHOLE COUNTRY, ISN'T HE?
THE LEADING CHIEF RETAINERS UNDER LORD NOBUNAGA ARE TARGETING THE CLANS THAT ARE AGAINST THE ODA CLAN.

YOU MEAN EVEN WITH THOSE MONSTROUS FUMAS AT ODAWARA CASTLE, SHE...?!
BY THE WAY, USAGI SUCCEEDED IN STEALING THE BLUEPRINT FOR ODAWARA CASTLE.

YOUR ANCESTOR'S STILL ALIVE, USAGI!!
USAGI...
USAGI...!!
TMP
TMP
ZWAK
THAT'S YOUR ANCESTOR, ISN'T IT?!
THERE'S A RUMOR THAT A MONSTER LIVES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF IGA.
HUH...?
I WANT TO GO!!
WE CAN FIND OUT IF WE GO LOOK FOR THEM!!
I WONDER IF THAT BEAR KU IS DOING WELL TOO?!

DON'T COMPLAIN, MAMEZO. JUST GET BACK TO WORK.
BUT...
NO.
WHY...?!
WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR WORK FIRST.
WHERE HAS LORD IEYASU GONE TO?!
MY LORD!!
TMP
TMP
MY LORD ...?!

SNIFF...
SNIFF...
GRIND
GRIND
FOLD
FOLD
I'M COMING IN...
SHIK
WAARGH!
BUT...
DON'T CRY!
GREAT !!
THEN I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A NEW ASSIGNMENT.
AH...
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE MADE QUITE A LOT OF MEDICINE FOR US TO STOCK!
LORD IEYASU...
SNIFF

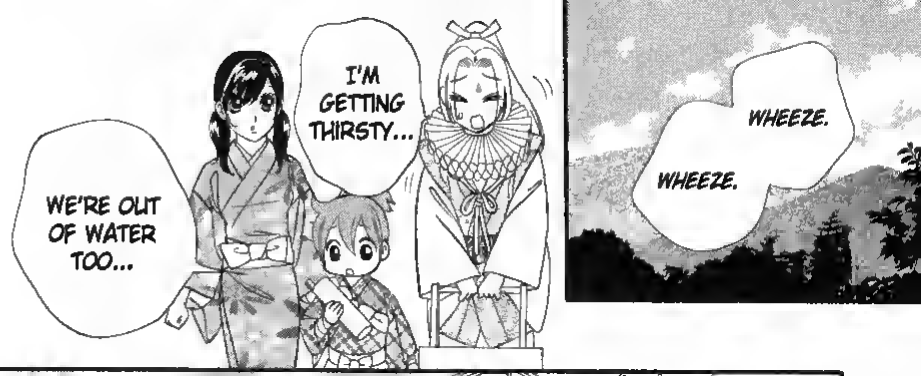
YOU'RE TO GO TO THE MOUNTAINS OF IGA AND FIND OUT WHAT THIS RUMORED MONSTER IS.
IGA...?
POP
SINCE IT'S WORK, YOU HAVE TO GO, RIGHT?

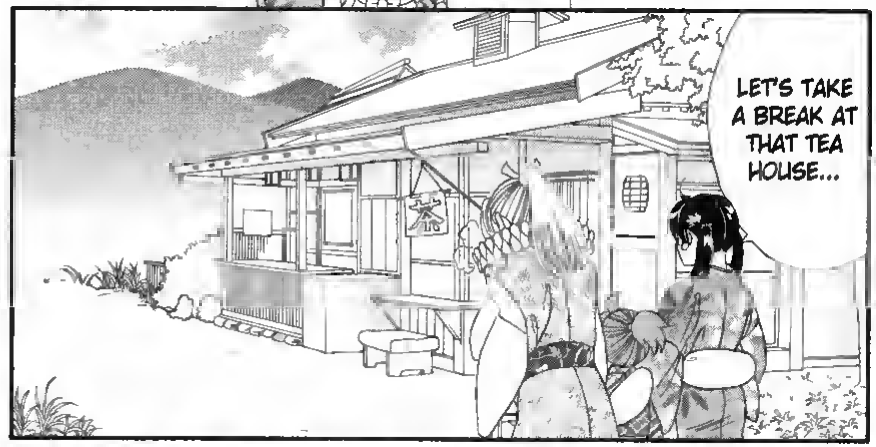
HE WANTS TO LIGHT UP THE DARKNESS INSIDE USAGI'S HEART...
I stitched this long-sleeved kimono by myself!!
USA, HOW'S MY DISGUISE LOOK?
...
USA, ARE YOU FEELING UNWELL...?
NO...
HEE HEE.
YOUR DISGUISE IS PERFECT, MAMEZO.

SEE YOU LATER!!
BE CAREFUL!
AND IT'S AN ILL-FATED PLACE FOR USAGI TOO...
ISN'T IT A LITTLE DANGEROUS TO HAVE HER GO TO IGA AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
...IS EXACTLY WHY YUKIMARU WANTS HER TO GO.
THAT...

NOW PAY UP!!
FWUMP
URGH!
THOK
OW!
USH
EAT AND RUN...?!
I WASN'T TRYING TO BILK!!
I FORGOT MY POUCH, SO I WAS RUNNING BACK TO GET IT!!

I'M REAL SORRY...
...BUT COULD YOU GUYS PAY FOR ME?
HOLD ON!!
L...LET'S GO TO A DIFFERENT SHOP...
YOU WERE GOING TO RUN AWAY, WEREN'T YOU?!
DON'T LIE.


I'M GETTING THIRSTY...
WE'RE OUT OF WATER TOO...
WHEEZE.
WHEEZE.


LET'S TAKE A BREAK AT THAT TEA HOUSE...
茶

DASH
DASH
SOMEBODY STOP THAT GUY...!!
HOW DARE YOU EAT AND RUN...!

AW, I CAN'T LET YOU GO LIKE THAT!!
TMP TMP
THERE'S NO NEED TO THANK ME.
I HAVEN'T THANKED YOU YET!!
I CAN'T PAY YOU BACK, BUT I'LL REPAY YOU WITH MY BODY!!
GLOM
AAH!
!!

WHY DO WE HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR...?
SIGH
TMP TMP
WHAT ?!
I BEG OF YOU!
PLEASE !!
I'LL DO ANYTHING, SO PLEASE HELP ME OUT...!!

I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO BE STUCK IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
WHY DID YOU...?

HOLD IT!!
WAIT!

WILL THIS BE ENOUGH?
YES...
THANKS A MILLION!!

AH HA HA HA HA HA HA
I'LL BE YOUR MUSCLEMAN UNTIL YOU GUYS GET THERE!!
HUH ?!
WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING FOR...?

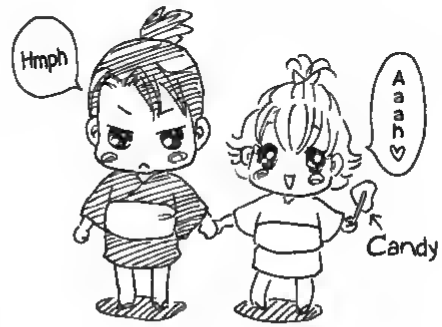
I'D DO A GOOD JOB. ☆
WINK
NO, THANK YOU.
TMP TMP

C'MON, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE MODEST.
SWP
AARGH!

YOU'RE HEADED FOR AZUCHI OR THE CAPITAL, RIGHT?!
YOU'RE BEING A NUISANCE !!
Y...
I'M NOT BEING MODEST ...

☆ GREETINGS ☆

Hello! It's Ue-Rin.
It's been a while since I last wrote, so I'm feeling a bit excited...



There's a page for the fans called "Tail of the Moon Extra" in the Japanese magazine. The image above is of Little Hanzo and Little Hanzou from the comic strips about young Hanzo and his family. Drawing the four-panel comic strips is really tough... I always have to think hard to come up with a new one. But I really enjoy drawing little kids!♡

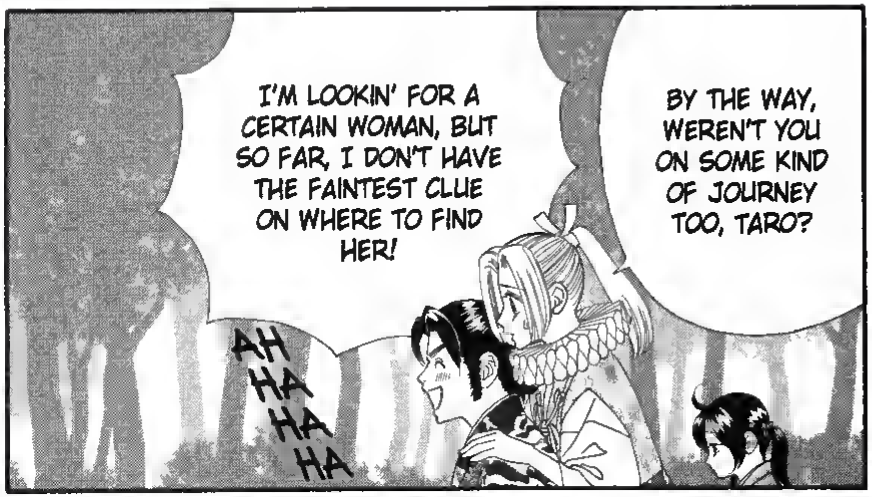
Tail of the Moon is gradually moving to its climax. Please continue to support Usagi and the others. And please send your letters and messages to the following address.

Tail of the Moon Editor
Viz Media
P.O. Box 77064
San Francisco, CA 94107

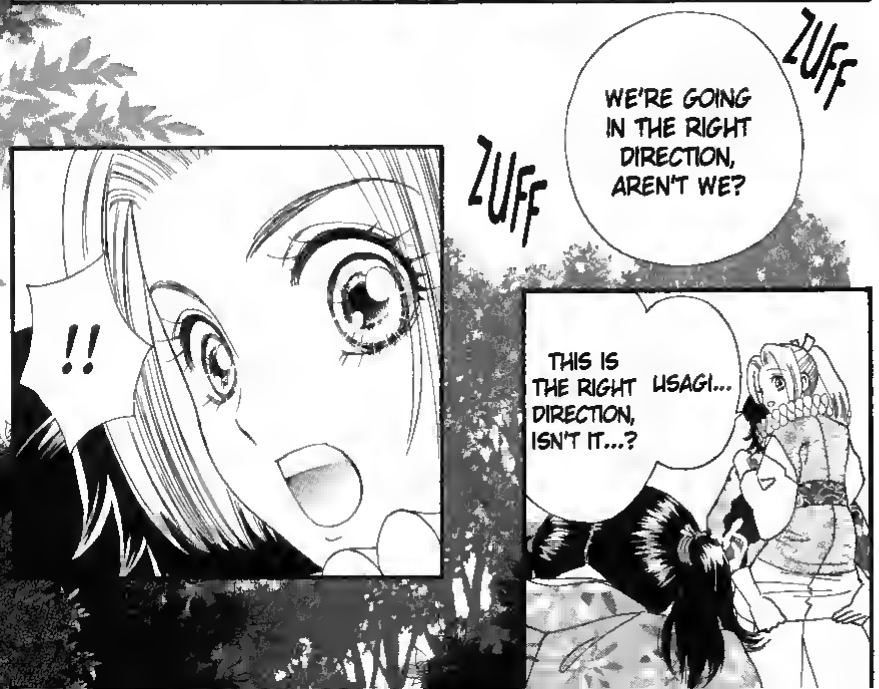
See you all in volume 13... Rinko Ueda

TMP
TMP
WAIT FOR ME, USAGI...
I'LL...
HUH?!
EEEEK...!
DASH
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SHY.
AAH!
TWIST
WHOA!
YUKI!!
FWISH

I'LL PROTECT YOU GUYS...!!
MUSCLE-MAN?!


I'M LOOKIN' FOR A CERTAIN WOMAN, BUT SO FAR, I DON'T HAVE THE FAINTEST CLUE ON WHERE TO FIND HER!
BY THE WAY, WEREN'T YOU ON SOME KIND OF JOURNEY TOO, TARO?
AH HA HA HA

WAH HA HA
AND WHY IS HE LAUGH-ING?
MAYBE HIS WIFE RAN AWAY FROM HIM?

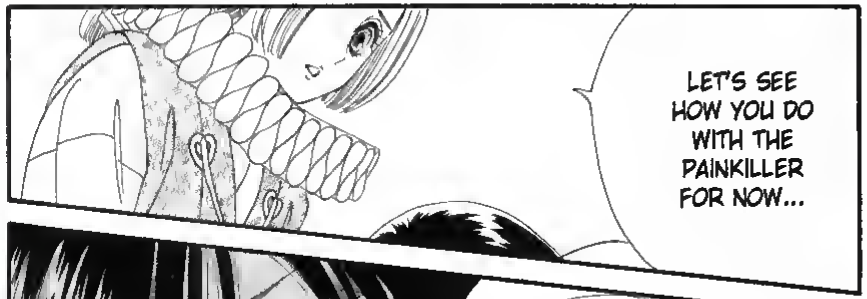

ZUFF
ZUFF
WE'RE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, AREN'T WE?
!!
THIS IS THE RIGHT DIRECTION, ISN'T IT...?
USAGI...

AND WHERE ARE YOU GUYS HEADED TO?
IGA...
THE CAPITAL.

HA HA HA HA
I...I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...
MY NAME'S TARO.
WHY IS HE LAUGHING LIKE THAT?
NICE TO MEET YOU!!
YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT HIM.
ZNT ZNT

IT'S OKAY, USAGI.
YUKI?!
IT'S IGA!
HUH ?!
SO WHICH IS IT?
IEYASU... AS IN TOKUGAWA IEYASU ?!
LORD IEYASU ORDERED US TO SEARCH FOR THE MONSTER THAT LIVES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF IGA.
YES.

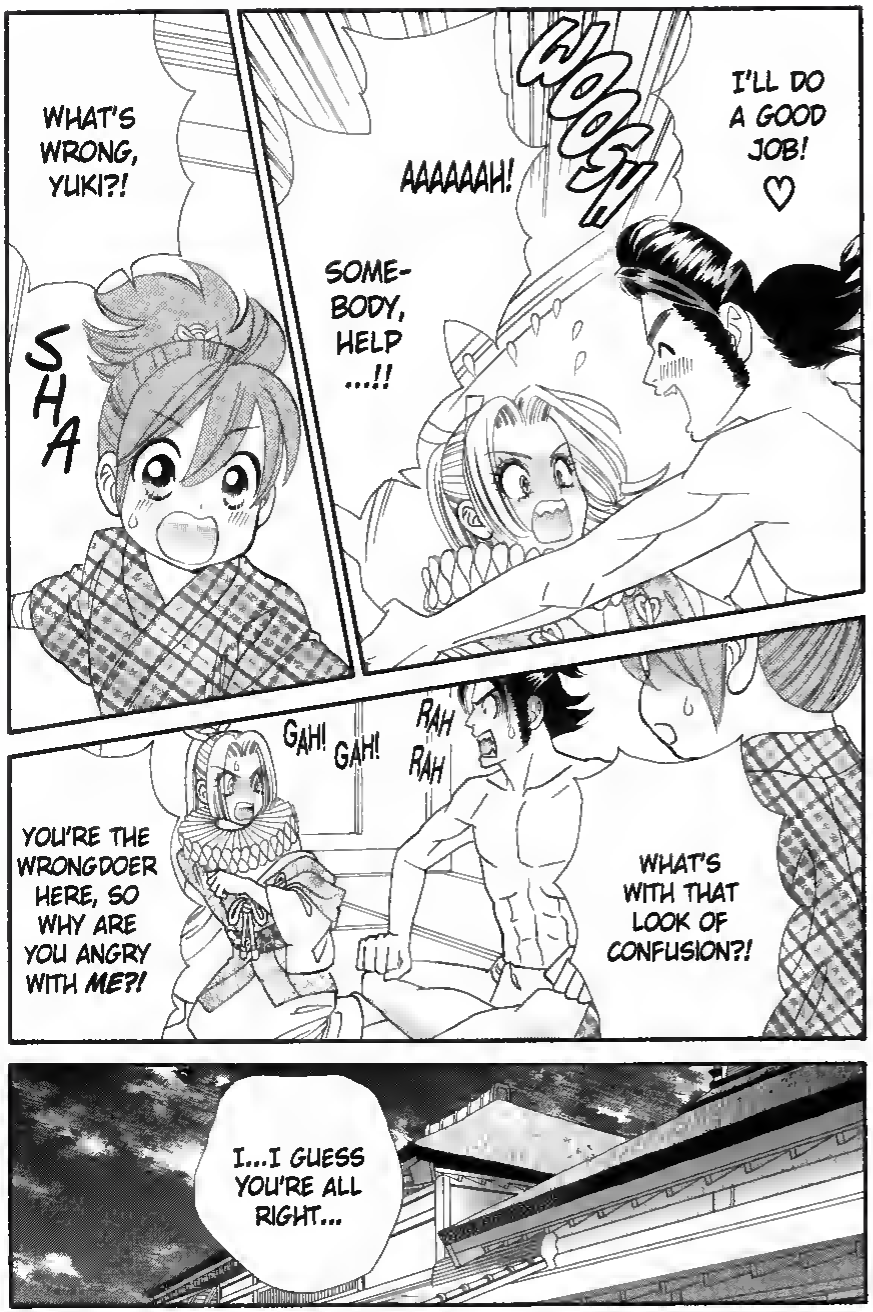
USA'S ALWAYS HAD BAD STOMACH-ACHES...
SO YOU'RE AN HERBALIST ?!
I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH YOU...
URRRGH...

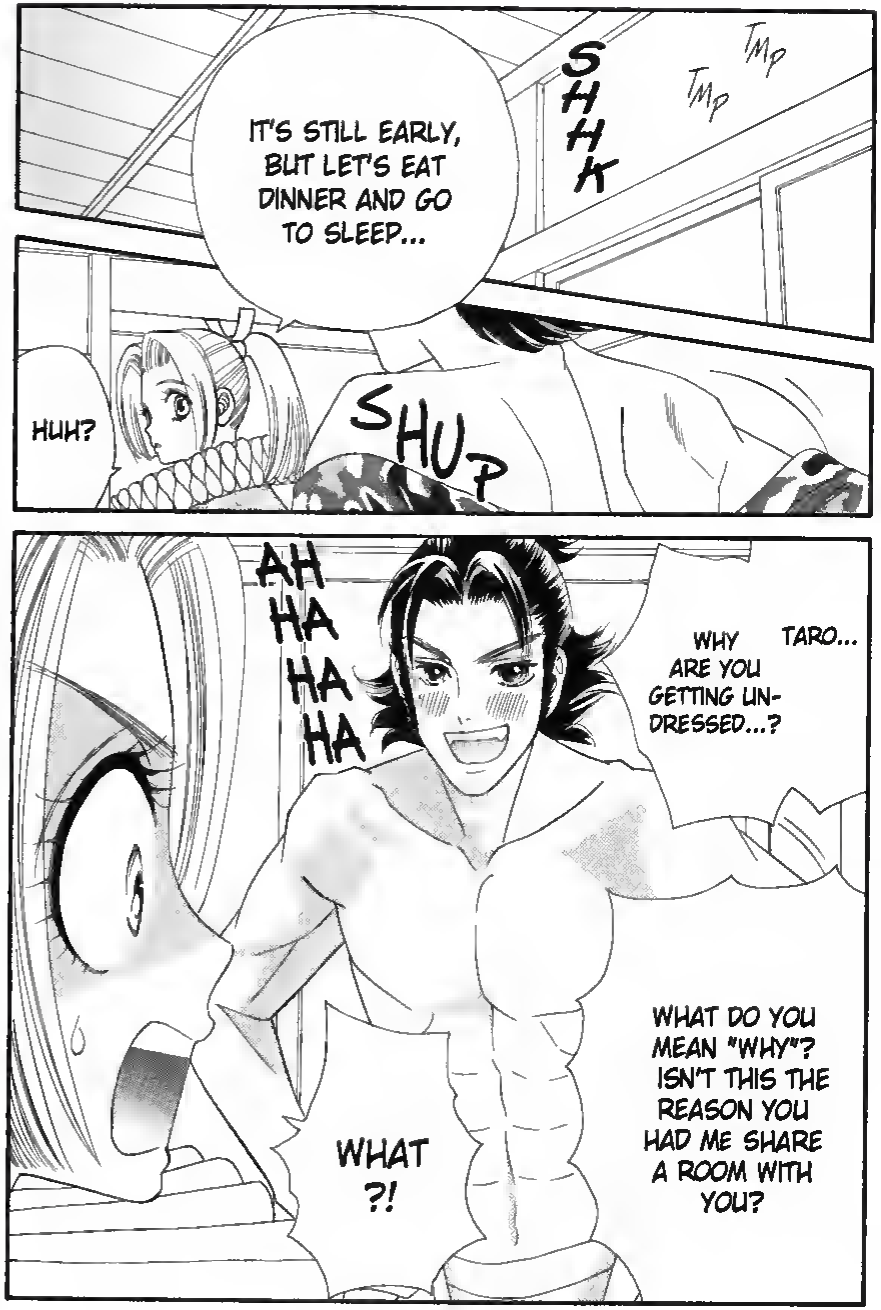

LET'S SEE HOW YOU DO WITH THE PAINKILLER FOR NOW...

OKAY.
PLEASE COME AND GET ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS.
MAMEZO...

HUH?
OKAY...
LET'S GO TO OUR ROOM.
TARO.

USA, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
MY STOM-ACH... IT HURTS...
USAGI?!
TARO... I'M FINE, SO CARRY USAGI INSTEAD!!
RIGHT...
THAT'S STRANGE...
URGH...


WHAT'S WRONG, YUKI?!
SHA
AAAAAAH!
WOOSH
I'LL DO A GOOD JOB! ♡
SOME-BODY, HELP ...!!
GAH! GAH!
RAH RAH
YOU'RE THE WRONGDOER HERE, SO WHY ARE YOU ANGRY WITH ME?!
WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK OF CONFUSION?!
I...I GUESS YOU'RE ALL RIGHT...

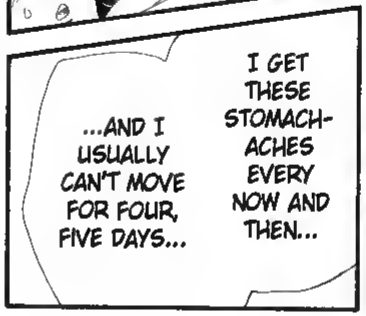

IT'S STILL EARLY, BUT LET'S EAT DINNER AND GO TO SLEEP...
SHHK
TMP
TMP
HUH?
SHUP
AH HA HA HA
WHY ARE YOU GETTING UN-DRESSED...?
TARO...
WHAT ?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WHY"? ISN'T THIS THE REASON YOU HAD ME SHARE A ROOM WITH YOU?

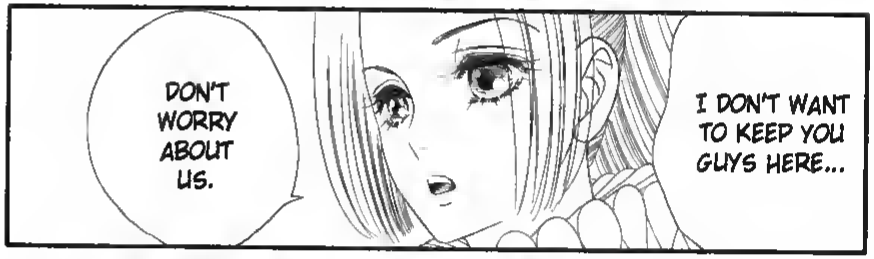
VUP
I'LL GO THEN.
YOU WANT ME TO GO, RIGHT?!
USA, WHAT ABOUT YOUR STOMACH?
I'M FINE.
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
LET'S GO.
I'M GOING TO GET CHANGED, SO GET OUT!!

ZWAK
HEY...
SHE WAS PRETENDING TO BE ILL.
PRETEND-ING?!
FOR GOD'S SAKE!!
...

CAN I...
...STAY BEHIND HERE...?

CHIRP
CHIRP
MAYBE SHE GOT FOOD POISONING?
WE'VE ALL BEEN EATING THE SAME FOOD, SO THAT'S PROBABLY UNLIKELY.
MY STOMACH STILL HURTS...
YUKI...


I GET THESE STOMACH-ACHES EVERY NOW AND THEN...
...AND I USUALLY CAN'T MOVE FOR FOUR, FIVE DAYS...


DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.
I DON'T WANT TO KEEP YOU GUYS HERE...

WE'LL JUST WAIT FOR YOUR STOMACH TO HEAL SO WE CAN ALL GO TO IGA TOGETHER.

YOU WORK UNDER LORD IEYASU NOW, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY.
WH-WH-WHAT SHOULD WE DO...?
ARE YOU SURE...?!
WOW...
IT'S CHANGED SO MUCH...
ALL THE HOUSES ARE NEW...
COUGH
COUGH

WHAT'S THAT?
HUH?
ARE YOU REALLY OKAY ...?
USA...
WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE IN IGA?!
YOU THERE.
YOU MAY PASS.
YOU'RE TOKUGAWA'S HERBALIST, HUH?
WE'RE VISITING IGA UNDER ORDERS FROM LORD TOKUGAWA IEYASU.
WHAAAT ?!
THE ODA CLAN IS HUNTING DOWN THE REMNANTS OF THE IGA NINJA.
WHO ARE THOSE PEOPLE ...?

ARE YOU GOING TO LIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE WITH YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND, USAGI?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT IGA HAS BEEN DESTROYED, HAVE YOU?
NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS, YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO MOVE ON UNLESS YOU ACCEPT IT, YOU KNOW?!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW, YUKI?!

COUGH
GASP
LET'S HAVE HER REST BY A TREE.
CAN YOU STAND UP, USAGI?
SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SHE'S PRETENDING THIS TIME... IS SHE OKAY?!
USAGI...
GASP
USA...
COUGH

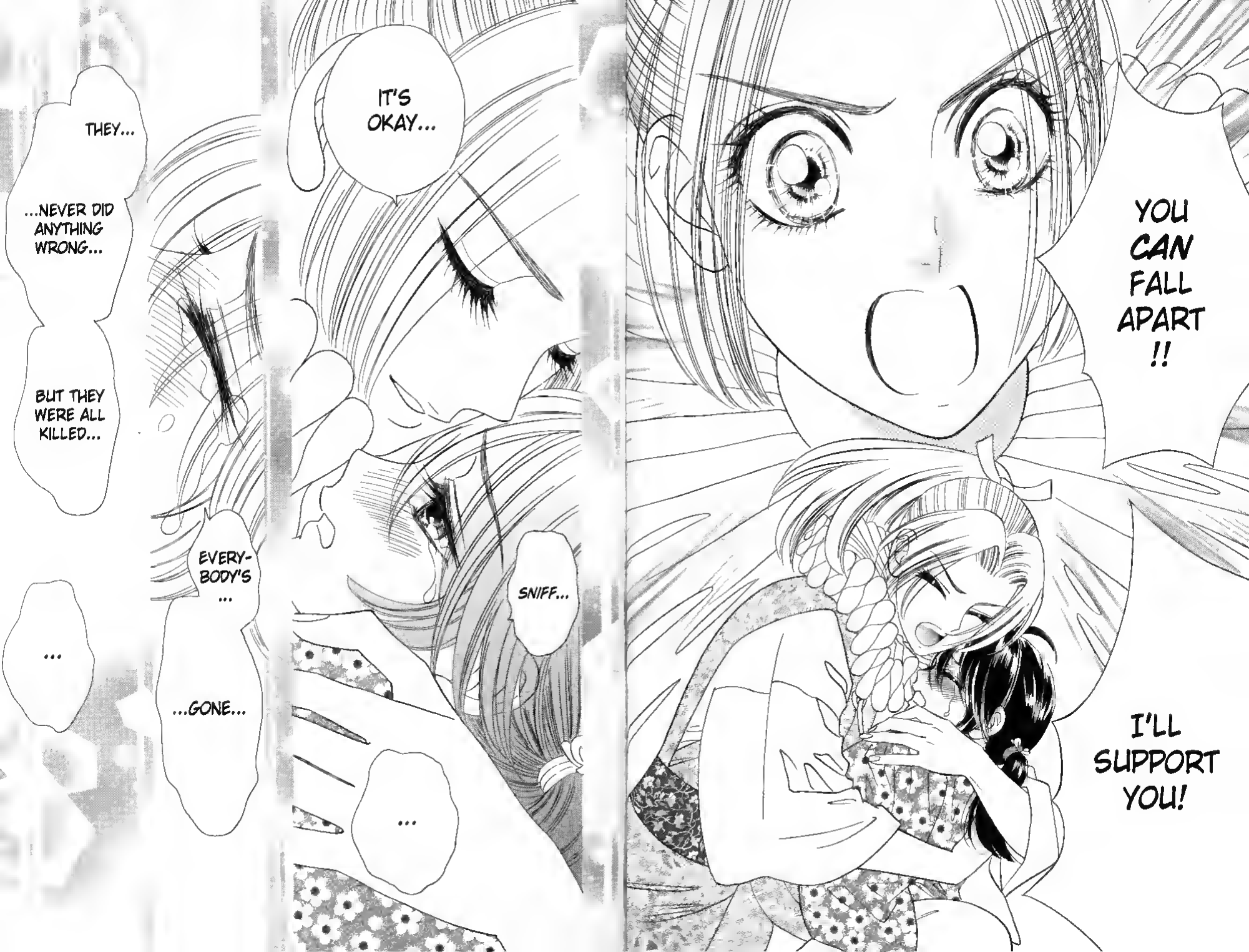
COUGH
I CAN'T... DO IT...
S... SURE.
CAN YOU TWO GO GET SOME WATER?
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
I CAN'T...
...GO...ANY FARTHER...
THERE'S A RIVER OVER THERE...

AH...
...

I HAVE ACCEPTED REALITY!!
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT I HAVEN'T ...?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
...

WHAT'S WRONG?!
AAAGH...
WHAT?
MAMEZO'S ...
...WATCHING ME...
MAMEZO'S ...
SNIFF...
I HAVE TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER ...
SNIFF...
I MUSTN'T...
...FALL APART...!!
AAGH...
UNGH...

NOOOO
AAAAAAAH!
USAGI ?!
CALM DOWN !!
USA?!


THEY...
...NEVER DID ANYTHING WRONG...
BUT THEY WERE ALL KILLED...
...
EVERY-BODY'S ...
...GONE...
IT'S OKAY...
SNIFF...
...
YOU CAN FALL APART !!
I'LL SUPPORT YOU!

I'LL...
...GROW UP QUICKLY...
WAAGH
USA...
...AND BECOME STRONG...
...SO THAT I CAN PROTECT YOU, USA!!

HANZOOOO!!
AAAAH!!

I'M ON MY WAY TO SEE YOU RIGHT NOW...
"THE DEAD ARE ALIVE INSIDE YOU."
PLEASE BE ALIVE...
HERMIT...
I'M FINE NOW...
LET'S GO ON.
TO BE CONTINUED...

YOU'VE GOT MANY FRIENDS HERE TO HELP YOU, USAGI.
YUKI...
...THEIR SOULS WOULD DIS-APPEAR...
I WAS AFRAID THAT IF I ACCEPTED GREAT-GRANDPA'S AND HANZO'S DEATHS...

Page 146, panel 1: Azuchi Castle
Azuchi Castle was one of Oda Nobunaga's main castles. It is located on the shores of Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture. The castle's strategic location enabled Nobunaga to manage his foes more easily, namely the Uesugi clan to the north and the Moun clan to the west.

Page 110, panel 1: Tokugawa Ieyasu
Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) was the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate. He made a small fishing village named Edo the center of his activities. Edo thrived and became a huge town and was later renamed Tokyo, the present capital.

Page 110, panel 1: Okazaki Castle
Okazaki Castle is in the city of Okazaki in Aichi Prefecture. This castle was home to various leaders throughout history, including Tokugawa Ieyasu. Though demolished in 1873, the castle was reconstructed in 1959.

Page 112, panel 4: Kanto
The Kanto region is to the east of Honshu and is made up of seven prefectures. Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba and Kanagawa.

Page 130, panel 2: Kunoichi
A term often used for female ninja. The word is spelled く ノ 一, and when combined, the letters form the kanji for woman, 女。

The ways of the ninja are mysterious indeed, so here is a glossary of terms to help you navigate the intricacies of their world.

Page 5, panel 3: Kaeru
The phrase *Buji ni kaeru* means "Return home safely." The pun is on the word *kaeru*, which means "frog" as well as "return."

Page 10, panel 1: Sakai
Sakai is a city in Osaka prefecture that is one of the largest and most important seaports in Japan. Once known for samurai swords, Sakai is now famous for quality kitchen knives and other cutlery.

Page 56: Hanami
Hanami literally means "flower viewing," and it traditionally refers to having a picnic party while admiring the beauty of cherry blossoms.

Page 90, panel 1: Ranmaru Mori
Ranmaru Mori is one of Oda Nobunaga's most famous vassals. He became Nobunaga's attendant at a young age and was recognized for his talent and loyalty.

Page 101: Odawara
Odawara is a city in Kanagawa Prefecture, and Odawara Castle was the stronghold of various rulers in Japanese history because of its strong defenses and strategic location. The original castle was eventually destroyed by the Meiji government, but it was rebuilt in 1960.

Page 2: Shimo no Hanzo
Shimo no means "the Lower," and in this case refers to Hanzo's geographic location rather than social status.

Page 2: Iga
Iga is a region on the island of Honshu and also the name of the famous ninja clan that originated there. Another area famous for its ninja is Kouga, in the Shiga prefecture on Honshu. Many books claim that these two ninja clans were mortal enemies, but in reality inter-ninja relations were not as bad as stories might suggest.

Page 2: Oda Nobunaga
Oda Nobunaga lived from 1534 to 1582, and came close to unifying Japan. He is probably one of the most famous Japanese warlords. He was the first warlord to successfully incorporate the gun in battle and is notorious for his ruthlessness.

Page 2: Mitsuhide Akechi
Mitsuhide Akechi became one of Oda Nobunaga's retainers after Nobunaga's conquest of Mino province (now Gifu prefecture) in 1566. He is known to have been more of an intellectual and a pacifier than a warrior.

Page 3: JR
"JR" stands for "Japan Railways." About 70 percent of Japan's railway network is owned and operated by the JR Group.

The battle of *Tensho Iga no Ron* is a historical fact, but it took a while for me to decide whether or not to include it in the story. It's going to be very sad to have the Iga Clan destroyed, and it's tough for me to draw that. But now that I've included it, I want to draw an Usagi who is unyielding to her sorrow and is making her way toward a bright future.

–Rinko Ueda

Rinko Ueda is from Nara prefecture. She enjoys listening to the radio, drama CDs, and Rakugo comedy performances. Her works include *Ryo*, a series based on the legend of Gojo Bridge, *Home*, a story about love crossing national boundaries, and *Toil of the Moon (Tsuki no Shippo)*, a romantic ninja comedy.